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33.

462.

DICATION.

Royal Highness

ANDRIA VICTORIA.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

FRONTISPIECE.

W. Chandler sculp.

—"Elinor shed torrents of tears as she walked for the last time through the shrubberies, but the tender hearted Anne supported and consoled her."—

London:
VIRTUE, TALLIS & Co 2, NORTHAMPTON SQUARE.
1833.

Victoria Edition of Original Copyright Works.

THE

GIPSY MOTHER,

OR THE

Miseries of Enforced Marriages.

by the

Authoress of Early Moreland, Fairaline, Woodbridge, &c.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Embellished with Engravings.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY VIRTUE, TALLIS, & Co.
2 NORTHAMPTON SQUARE.

THE

-35.

GIPSY MOTHER;

OR THE

MISERIES OF ENFORCED MARRIAGE:

A Tale of Mystery.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

I will tell thee
Such strange occurrents of my fore-past life,
That all thy young-sprung griefs shall seem but sparks
To the great fire of my calamities.—Old Play.

BY HANNAH MARIA JONES,

AUTHORESS OF EMILY MORELAND, ROSALINE WOODBRIDGE, SCOTTISH CHIEFTAINS, &c. &c.

1833.

London:

Printed by C. BAYNES, 13, Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields;

PUBLISHED BY VIRTUE, TALLIS, AND Co.

2, NORTHAMPTON SQUARE.

462.

DEDICATION.

To Her Royal Highness

PRINCESS ALEXANDRIA VICTORIA.

To her whose image is enshrined in the heart of every Englishwoman—to whose august example the rising generation of her own sex are taught to look for the illustration of every feminine virtue—to her whose well-being and well-doing is the interest and pride of every Englishman, and to whose future career they are taught to look for England's happiness and glory—TO THE PRINCESS VICTORIA—these pages are dedicated, by one who feels too sensibly her own insignificance, and the comparatively trifling importance of her labours, to venture to *address* Her Royal Highness—but who yet humbly hopes, by this public testimonial of respect and gratitude for the benefits conferred on the English nation in general, and in particular

the female part of it, to add weight and consideration to a work, which has little more to boast than that it may afford amusement for an idle hour.

For its morals or its motives the authoress need offer no pledge—the most depraved would not dare to affix a name so pure, so hallowed as that of Her Royal Highness the PRINCESS VICTORIA, to aught that could tend to debase or injure the sacred cause of truth and virtue. For its defects (if any) as a work of entertainment, only one excuse is offered—namely, that it has been written under circumstances of perhaps unexampled suffering and difficulty. To many persons this will probably be considered a very inefficient plea; but it affords the strongest reason for endeavouring to shield it under the name of that royal and august personage, to whom sorrow and distress never yet pleaded in vain, and to whom, therefore, with unfeigned admiration of her talents and virtues, "THE GIPSY MOTHER" is dedicated, by Her Royal Highness's

Most respectful servant,

THE AUTHORESS.

THE GIPSY MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

> Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
> Do bring unnatural troubles. Infected minds
> To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

THE last carriage had departed from the door of the Opera House—the few pedestrians, who had lingered at that late hour to gaze at the gay votaries of pleasure, were dispersing on their different routes—and the gray morning was already beginning to dim the lustre of the lamps, when two young men of fashionable appearance, engaged in earnest conversation, sauntered slowly down the colonnade.

"The hour is suitable enough!" observed Mr. Levison, the elder of the two; "but, certainly, the place appears to be strangely chosen, for the development of a tale of mystery; and I cannot yet relinquish my opinion that some imposition was intended to be practised, which might have been attended with serious consequences; and that you would have been very foolish to have come alone, as was your first intention."

"I am almost sorry I did not, though," returned the

younger; "for I suspect that your presence has been the means of preventing me from receiving the promised communication."

"Why do you think so?" demanded Levison; "have you seen——"

Montgomery, which was the name of the other speaker, pressed his arm, as an intimation for him to remain silent, and, by an inclination of his head, directed his friend's attention to a man of ordinary appearance, who was standing in the shade of one of the doors, as if awaiting their approach; but, before they came near enough to distinguish his features, he suddenly darted between the pillars, and crossing the street, was soon out of their sight.

Montgomery's first impulse was to follow him—but Levison forcibly held his arm.

"Are you mad, Denzil?" he exclaimed; "that fellow has the very look of a thief! He would decoy you into some of the infamous houses that abound in the courts and alleys in the direction he has taken, and your life would perhaps be sacrificed to your foolish curiosity."

Montgomery did not reply, but he silently repented having made his cautious friend the confidant of his nocturnal appointment; and they took another turn down the colonnade, Montgomery still keeping silence.

"If you are convinced that this ill-looking fellow was the person you expected to meet, we may as well go home," observed Levison. "Should my uncle discover that we are out, at this time of the morning, we shall have a fine lecture when we meet at breakfast to-morrow, or rather, this morning."

Montgomery cast a scrutinising look around, but no

person was visible except the watchman, who had two or three times held up his lantern, to take a survey of their persons as they passed him, and most reluctantly he was compelled to accede to his friend's proposal.

They turned down Pall Mall, their residence being in St. James's Place; and as they proceeded, Levison again recurred to the promised communication which had brought them thither.

"I can tell you no more than I before told you," observed Montgomery. "I was just going to knock at your uncle's door, in the dusk of the evening, when a man, wrapped in an old surtout—in fact, the very man you saw just now—approached me. I had seen him loitering about the house, as I came up the street, and I now turned round, thinking that he was either going to beg, or to make some inquiry of me. His manner, however, had nothing of the humility which might have been expected from the meanness of his appearance.

"'May I request you to tell me your name?' he said, in a low but deep tone.

"I know not why it was, but my heart seemed to thrill as he spoke. I recollected, however, your uncle's frequent cautions against the impositions practised upon novices in London, and I replied, with some asperity,

"'It is an odd request from a stranger—I must first know what are your motives for the demand.'

"'It is of little consequence, perhaps, that you should answer,' he replied; 'for I suspect I am quite as well informed as yourself on the subject. You are called Denzil Montgomery, are you not?'

"I was startled at the tone and manner in which this was uttered. I might say, it was expressive of contempt—

but it was more than contempt—indeed, I cannot describe it—and, with a feeling somewhat approaching to alarm, I laid hold of the knocker, but was prevented in my intention by his seizing my arm with a powerful grasp.

"'Stop, young man,' he observed; 'I have no hostile intention towards you; on the contrary, I seek nothing but your good. I am about to quit England for ever—in short, it was to serve you, that I was induced to revisit this hateful country, after an absence of eighteen years. Do not, then, render my purpose abortive by your foolish fears! Will you meet me, and hear what I have to say to you?'

"The dread of imposition vanished from my mind—there was something in his stern manner that defied suspicion, and I unhesitatingly replied—

"'I will meet you, when and where you please!'

"He put his hand to his forehead, as if considering, and after a short pause observed—

"'It must be to-night, for I leave London at daybreak, to-morrow.'

"'Why not now, then?—I am ready to accompany you, wherever you please,' I replied.

"'No—at this time another duty engages me, that cannot be postponed—but whither do your engagements lead you this evening?'

"Until this moment I had forgotten those who were probably expecting me impatiently to join them in our proposed pleasurable party to the Opera, as well as the delight which I had anticipated from the evening's amusement—but his question recalled all to my recollection, and I replied—

"'I am going to the Opera with some friends, and as it is the first time either they or I have been there, I know not well how I can break my engagement.'

"'But you can easily slip away, after the Opera has concluded; and that is as good a place as I can appoint, as it is about half way between your home and my temporary residence. I will be there when the company come out, and you can then join me—but as I shall in all probability detain you some hours, it will be useless to keep your friends waiting for you—you must therefore contrive to come unobserved; and a gay young man like you can easily frame an excuse in the morning for your absence.'

"'You are mistaken, friend,' I observed, rather angrily, for I did not like the manner in which he uttered the last sentence, 'my absence for a night is not a matter of so little importance to my friends, or so easily excused, as you imagine; and if your communication is not of sufficient consequence to excuse it——'

"'You will judge of that, when you hear it,' he observed, interrupting me hastily; 'but I am glad to hear that your *friends* are so attentive to your moral conduct —*that* is something in their favour.'

"I had a great mind to rebuke him for his impertinence, and to demand what he meant by the contemptuous emphasis which he laid on the word 'friends;' but, I know not how it was, I could not assume courage enough, though——"

"But I would have asked him, had I heard him," interrupted Levison, with indignant earnestness. "Had I been there, I would not only have asked him, but would have wrung the meaning from his throat, if he had any

meaning; but I still adhere to my first opinion—he is some artful impostor, who wished to take advantage of your romantic disposition, to draw you into a snare; and I hope, should he make a second attempt, you will not suffer his imposing manners to prevent you from acting with common sense, and calling in such assistance as will enable you to secure him, and deliver him into the hands of justice."

Montgomery did not reply, for he was vexed at his friend Levison's observation respecting his disposition to romance, and it did not immediately occur to him to say, "but, allowing it to be true, how should this man have acquired the knowledge of it, so as to select me as a fit subject to impose upon?" He did not, however, say it, for he was unwilling to renew the subject with his prejudiced friend; and he was also, at this moment, occupied in watching two persons who were walking slowly in the shade of the houses on the opposite side, and in one of whom, although he could but indistinctly see him at that distance, he believed he recognised the mysterious stranger, who now appeared to be accompanied by a female. Without making any remark to Levison, Montgomery kept his eyes upon them, attentively watching their motions. He saw them separate—the man stood still, and the woman crossed the road to the side on which they were. As Montgomery anticipated, she waited until they came up to her, and then, in a low tone, solicited charity.

Montgomery's heart was ever feelingly alive to the miseries of his fellow creatures—such an appeal, therefore, would not have passed unheeded, had he had no other motive for attending to it. He drew his purse

from his pocket, and turned to the woman, who stood close up to a door, against which she leaned, as if overcome with weakness.

"You will never recollect, or, at least, never practise my uncle's lessons, Denzil," observed Levison, relinquishing his arm. "Mind she don't snatch your purse," he continued in a low voice, as he walked onward alone.

Denzil made no reply, but as he drew out some silver, he fixed an earnest look on the woman's countenance. The dark complexion, the raven-black tresses, and the splendid large black eyes which she fixed on Montgomery, returning his scrutiny with interest, together with the singularity of her costume, gave her an air altogether so foreign from what he had ever seen before, that Montgomery would have felt interested, had he not had a personal motive for being so.

"What country do you belong to?" he demanded. "You are not an Englishwoman, I think."

"I am of all countries!" she replied; "my nation are wanderers upon the face of the earth—forming communion with none—yet possessing power over the destinies of all. I am one of those, young man, who can foretel the fate of others—yet know not my own. I can tell, by the aspect of those stars which are disappearing before the glorious orb of day, that some evil threatens you—if your good genius counteract not the spells that are weaving to enthral you. You have this night thrown away an opportunity—but remember, it is as injurious to act with too great caution, as it is to be rash."

"Will that opportunity occur again?" demanded Denzil. "You, who pretend to know all things, can tell me that."

"If you can get rid of your companion, it is not even now too late to repair the error you have committed. Return here in half an hour, and you will find one who can tell you things past, present, and to come. But if you do not return, take this warning from me—Desist from your present pursuit—shun, as your greatest misery, that which you now look upon as your greatest happiness.—In plainer terms, you must not marry her whom you now love—if you do, you will incur a fearful guilt."

The voice of Levison, calling loudly upon him to come on, roused Montgomery from the state of horror and surprise into which he had fallen. The Gipsy, for such he supposed her to be, was gone—yet the sound of her voice, as it deepened into an almost unearthly tone, when she uttered the last words, seemed to ring in his ears: and, when he joined Levison, he was for some moments deaf and insensible to all that the latter addressed to him.

"Why, what is the matter now?" exclaimed the latter. "More mysteries, Denzil? You look as if you had seen a ghost, or received a summons to the other world! For heaven's sake, do act like a rational being, and not stare about you with that bewildered look. We are here in London, in the middle of St. James's Street, and surrounded by real, substantial houses of brick and stone, inhabited by beings of flesh and blood, and not in the wilds of Scotland, the natural abode of fays and witches, as you seem to think we are."

"Do not talk to me just now—I am not in the humour for raillery!" exclaimed Montgomery.

"What was the long tale that woman was telling you?" said Levison, as they reached the door of their home. "I suspect, some lamentable story, that has made a

deep impression on your tender heart; but you should do as my uncle tells you—come to London with a determination to shut your eyes and your ears to all sights and sounds of misery—believe them all to be (as ninety-nine out of a hundred of them really are) merely attempts to impose upon credulity."

"I wish I could believe that woman was an impostor—yet I cannot!" said Montgomery, in an agitated tone. "Oh, no—she had some deep foundation for what she uttered!"

"Good heavens! are you serious, Denzil? Then she was an emissary, perhaps, of the mysterious stranger. But they have answered their purpose for the present, I suppose. Come now, confess—how much did she succeed in extracting from your purse?"

"You are mistaken," replied Denzil. "She did not take any money from me.—I offered her some silver, but she went away without taking it."

"Art, rank cunning!" said Levison. "That was intended to impress you with an opinion of her disinterestedness, and forward their future plans."

"*You* seem to have profited well by your uncle's lessons, however," muttered Denzil, as he followed him into the house.

The servant looked at them, as he admitted them, with a significant expression.

"What is the matter, James?" demanded Levison; "my uncle does not know that we have been out, does he?"

"He does, indeed, sir, and he has roused the whole house—Miss Rachel, and my young lady, and all!"

"Then we shall get a pretty lecture," said Levison; "but come, we may as well face it at once—where are they?"

"In the library, sir—Master has just ordered breakfast."

"Breakfast!" repeated Levison, "and we have not yet been in bed; but, no matter, they will see we have not been very outrageous in our vigils—so come along!"

Reluctantly, Denzil followed to the library. He foresaw that he should not now be able to return to the spot where he had seen the Gipsy, within half an hour. Some minutes had already been lost, by Levison's tediousness, and again he inwardly execrated his folly in having communicated to him the purpose of his night's expedition, instead of going alone, as he ought to have done.

The keen eye of the elder Mr. Levison surveyed them from head to foot, in silence, as they entered the library. Miss Rachel bridled up her tall, stately form, with more than usual dignity, and Fanny Levison's naturally bright complexion deepened into a crimson glow, as her anxious eye rested on Montgomery's perturbed countenance.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said old Levison, drily—"I did not expect to be honoured so early with your company to breakfast. Fanny, my dear, ring the bell, and desire James to bring more muffins—so early a morning-walk, must have given the young men an appetite."

"I am very sorry, sir, to have been the means of disturbing you and the family at such an unseasonable hour," said Montgomery, who saw that, however Mr. Levison disguised it, by assumed coolness, the storm was rising; and, anxious to mitigate its fury, he added—"but it was a singular circumstance that called me out; a circumstance that, that—in short, I cannot explain; but, I am sure, if

you knew all, you would not blame me nor Charles, who, indeed, accompanied me from a friendly motive, and—and, in short——"

"You seem very likely to make *short* work of it, the way you are getting on, sir," interrupted old Levison; "but I beg, Mr. Denzil Montgomery, you will not trouble yourself with any explanations—I do not require them, sir. You are quite independent—quite your own master, and welcome to take the shortest way to ruin, if it pleases you; but, as to my nephew, Charles Levison, I can only say, that if your friendship is more valuable than mine—if he thinks he can do better by following your councils than mine, why, all I can say is, that he is welcome to do so—it will not grieve me, I assure you, in the least—I have done my best to open your eyes to the dangers of London—I came to London solely for your advantage and pleasure. But I really wonder that you have been so moderate—an evening at the Opera, and a midnight excursion after it, are really too little, too trifling, for a beginning—You should have come home at eleven or twelve to-morrow, with disfigured features, or perhaps a broken limb and the loss of your watches, which I am rather surprised to see are still in your possession. Your money I do not ask you about,—young men cannot be supposed to enter into such frolics, without well paying for them."

"Our *frolic*, as you call it, has been a cheap one, I assure you, uncle," observed Charles, scarcely able to refrain from laughing. "I can answer for it, that I have not expended one penny—and, except Denzil gave any thing to a pretty beggar, who detained him with a long lamentable tale at the corner of one of the streets——"

"A beggar! and at this time of night, or rather morn-

ing! and stand, too, at the corner of a street, where you might have been rushed on by four or five fellows, and overpowered in a minute—you must be mad, Denzil! Did I never tell you what a narrow escape I had, when I first came to London, in the year 73—when I was as near losing my life by my imprudence? I was then—let me see—just about your age—just nineteen—but I have told you the story before, I am sure I have."

"Denzil has forgotten it, I am convinced," said Charles, (who knew that if once the old gentleman commenced one of his stories, all his resentment would subside,) "and Fanny, too, seems all curiosity to hear it."

Fanny gave a sly glance of reproof at her mischievous cousin.

"Well, then, I will tell you—but sit down, Fanny, and take your breakfast, instead of encouraging that dog to be an annoyance to every body—I really wonder how females, in particular, can be so partial to such dangerous animals—I am sure I am always in dread lest they should suddenly go mad and bite one, especially in London, where, during the summer months, they are suffered to rove about the streets in a dangerous manner, as I once experienced, for——"

"But you have forgotten the story you were going to tell us, uncle, of your escape from the murderers," said Charles. "A mad dog is a common, every-day occurrence, but such an adventure as yours, though it probably has, and may occur again——"

"Not under such circumstances, Charles, not under such circumstances. But I will tell you the whole, and then you will judge for yourselves. It was, as I said, in the year 73——"

Denzil was in agonies. He looked at his watch—it

wanted but five minutes of the appointed half hour; in that five minutes he could reach the spot, but he dreaded to arouse the old gentleman's resentment, by quitting the room at the commencement of one of his most interesting stories, nor rouse his curiosity by avowing that he wanted again to go out.

Before the story was half concluded, Charles Levison was fast asleep in his chair—Miss Rachel had stolen away to make the most of her early rising, by settling her domestic affairs, two or three hours before the usual time—and Fanny was enjoying the freshness of the air, and wishing herself in the country again, while she watered the few flowers in the balcony, which were but a poor substitute for the delightful gardens and shrubberies she had left behind.

Denzil, therefore, was the only auditor Mr. Levison had left him—if he, indeed, could be called an auditor; for the sounds fell senseless upon his ear, while his thoughts were totally absorbed in the events of the last few hours.

"So you see, my dear boy, that the most cautious may be taken in," concluded Mr. Levison, after a tedious narration, in which it was plain his imagination had played the traitor with him, and exaggerated a mere stratagem to defraud him of a little coin, into a desperate attempt to rob and murder. "I hope, therefore," he continued, "that having escaped so well this time, you will be more careful for the future, and never let mistaken pity draw you aside for a moment, to listen to such people as Charles tells me you were in company with last night; but, I declare, it is past six—it is time I took my medicine—but your folly has deranged every thing. I should not be at

all surprised if I have a return of my old complaint, after all the precautions I have taken against it. Early rising, though it is pleasurable and profitable to the young, is not so good for those in declining years. When I was at your age, indeed——"

"What is my age, sir?" said Denzil, suddenly interrupting him; "you have sometimes told me that Fanny and I were exactly the same age; but I cannot help thinking that she is younger than I am, for it seems to me that I remember her a very little girl, when I was a tall boy."

"And now she is a little *woman*, I suppose I must call her—for she has the airs and consequence of one, though she is not yet out of her teens—and you are a tall *man;* I suppose you write yourself 'man,' although you have all the folly and thoughtlessness of a boy; but let us dismiss this nonsense—Charles is asleep, and I dare say you will have no objection to follow his example, for you look quite feverish and tired. I declare, I shall be glad to get you all down into the country, and into a regular way of living again, for it will indeed be well, if we now get out of London without some mischief."

Mr. Levison hobbled off to his chamber, to take his morning dose; and Denzil was left alone with Fanny, Charles being too soundly buried in sleep, to be reckoned as one of the company.

Though feverish and tired, as Mr. Levison had remarked, Denzil Montgomery never had less inclination to sleep than at the present moment. With folded arms and irregular step, he paced the room backwards and forwards, while Fanny, though she affected to be engaged with the book which she had taken from the shelves,

from time to time raised her sparkling blue eyes to his, with a look of surprise and inquiry.

"You are unusually silent, my dear Fanny," said Denzil, at length stopping his hurried walk, and throwing himself on the chair opposite to her. "Are you, too, angry with me, for having played the truant?"

"Angry! no, Denzil, only surprised and grieved, that any thing should have occurred to distress you, which you think necessary to conceal from your best friends."

"It is only that I would not willingly distress those friends, and that I fear, I know not why, to incur the reproach of some whom I hardly know whether I should consider as such, that I am silent as to the cause that drew me from home last night," replied Denzil.

"Then there is a mystery, and you are bound to concealment," observed Fanny, looking very grave—"Oh, Denzil, beware! how often have you been cautioned against indulging that disposition to romance——"

"This is the second time to-night I have been reproached respecting my love of the marvellous," interrupted Denzil, rather petulantly; "yet, I assure you, Fanny, in this instance I have nothing to reproach myself with; for it was not my seeking, and I acted with all due caution—with too much caution, indeed, for it defeated my purpose."

"Pray, do not talk to me any more about it," said Fanny, assuming his own tone; "for, unless you can speak plainly, and tell me the whole story, you had better not raise my curiosity at all."

"I cannot tell you, then, Fanny," said Denzil, gasping from excess of agitation, as the recollection of the Gipsy's

last words rushed into his mind; "I must not tell you—I must not talk with you—I must leave you, for ever, unless my doubts, my fears, are explained!"

"Good heavens! Denzil, are you mad? what is it you mean?" exclaimed Fanny, starting up; "Charles! Charles! rouse yourself—what has Denzil been doing? where has he been?"

"Been—been only to meet that man. It was very foolish, and so I told him," returned Charles, half asleep, "an old impostor! I wish I had seen him."

"Who? what is it you are talking of? why do you not at once tell my father, if Denzil is in danger?" exclaimed Fanny.

"Tell my uncle—tell him what?" said Charles, rubbing his eyes, and beginning to recollect himself, "I have nothing to tell, child, except a foolish dream, about I know not what; but I must positively go to bed, for I am completely tired out—and Denzil, I am sure, had better try to go to sleep, too—it will bring us both to our sober senses."

"Tell me but one thing, Denzil, before you go, and I shall be satisfied," said Fanny, detaining the latter, as he was following his companion out of the room. "Have you been induced to drink too much wine, or are you really unhappy?"

"I have not been drinking, my dear girl, but I am really unhappy," said Denzil, in a serious tone; "though I know not that I have any real cause to be so—perhaps the whole is unfounded; but the evil is, I know not how to prove it so."

Fanny relaxed the hold she had kept of his arm—her lips quivered—and as she turned from him to the win-

dow, to conceal her tears, Denzil followed her, exclaiming —"Fanny, my beloved, adored Fanny! And yet, wretch as I am, how dare I call you so, when perhaps——"

"For mercy's sake, do not talk so wildly, Denzil. Oh, what can have happened!" and she clasped her hands in agony—"what can have been done, to occasion this change? I saw during the whole of yesterday evening, that something unusual had disturbed you—my aunt, too, remarked that you were not in your usual spirits, nor did you seem so much delighted with the music as she expected you would have been; but, then, your manners, your affection towards me, did not appear to have changed—on the contrary, how proud and happy you made me, when you said—you know what you said, Denzil, when the prima donna sang your favourite *Non che piu andrai.*"

She blushed, as she recalled to the recollection of her lover this expression of his tenderness, and Denzil with a sigh replied—

"Yes, I know what I said, dear Fanny—and said, with truth, that I would rather hear you warble it, with that grace and simplicity so peculiarly your own, than hear it as we did last night, loaded with all the ornament that skill and science could bestow."

"Let me sing it to you now," said Fanny, with a tender smile, "and try if it will not lull into quiet those vexations, whatever they may be, which have so much discomposed you."

"Not now, not now—Oh no, dearest Fanny, I dare not trust myself to listen to you now," exclaimed Denzil, with an air of distraction. "Oh no, I will go and try to seek repose—I will endeavour to reason myself into

calmness—I dare not listen to your voice now, I dare not think how often I have listened to it, until——"

He rushed out of the room, and Fanny remained for some moments gazing after him, with scarcely less emotion than he had himself betrayed.

"Heaven preserve his senses!" she at length ejaculated, "and yet, surely, these cannot be the visions of a distempered brain—there is too much method in them for madness—and yet, what possible event could render it a crime for him to love me? It is true, my father does not, I believe, suspect that his affection for me differs from that which my cousin Charles feels for me—but if he did, would he object to it? Oh, no, he is too kind and indulgent, both to him and me; and if Denzil's fortune is but small, as I sometimes suspect, shall not I have sufficient wealth for both?"

The entrance of her aunt Rachel disturbed Fanny's reverie.

"Upon my word, niece," observed the bustling old lady, "the vagaries of these wild young men seem to have deranged every thing in the house. The servants, instead of gaining, by having been roused out of bed, two or three hours before their usual time, stand yawning and gaping till my hands itch to box their ears! Your father has gone to sleep in his arm-chair, instead of walking about for an hour after taking his morning draught, as the physician prescribed; and you, instead of making up for last night's dissipation, by double diligence at your studies this morning, stand looking through the window, though I have often told you, when remarking the conduct of the lady opposite, that there cannot be a surer indication of a vacant mind, than to see a female con-

stantly occupied in gazing at what is passing in the streets."

"I beg your pardon, dear aunt—I was not conscious what I was doing—indeed, I am not well!" and she sat down, and burst into tears.

"Not well, my dear, dear child!" repeated her fond relative, in alarm: "you are not well, indeed, my poor Fanny—your hands are as hot as fire, and your face is flushed. Idiot that I was, to chide you! do not cry, my dear child, you will break my heart—you must go instantly to bed, and have some whey!—this is the result of my brother's folly! I will send directly for Doctor Harford! Good heavens, and to think that I should reprove you for idleness!"

"Do not alarm yourself, dear aunt," said Fanny, beginning to recover from the hysterical affection which had seized her—"you must recollect that I am not used to such late hours as we kept last night; and, from the heat of the house, and the excitement of the music, I could not sleep during the little time I was in bed. Besides, Martha had told me, as I was undressing, that Charles and Denzil had slipped out of the house after seeing us safe, which, you know, alarmed me, because I know what a dangerous place London is, as papa says."

"Your father is——I was going to say a very unbecoming word, Fanny—but it is, indeed, very foolish of him to be always preaching up the dangers of London. Why did he bring the two boys to town, unless they were to see something of life; and they cannot do that, if they are to be always tied to our apron strings. It is his foolish nonsense that has done all the harm—he has filled your head with imaginary terrors, and you have literally

frightened yourself into a fever; but come, my dear child, let me see you to your chamber, and then I shall know what to do."

Fanny readily obeyed her, glad to be left to the solitude of her own apartment, having received a promise that her father should not be alarmed with any report of her illness, and that her aunt would wait till Doctor Harford made his usual morning-call upon Mr. Levison, when, if she was not better, she (Fanny) would not object to take his advice.

"Should it be only a cold, my dear child—which is not unlikely, as you are not used to public places, and the Opera House, certainly, was very hot last night—I will not yield my skill even to Doctor Harford's; but if it should be a nervous fever, which I am terribly afraid of, from these fits of weeping and trembling, we cannot too soon have his advice."

Long before Doctor Harford came, Fanny was fast asleep—she had, indeed, wept till her eyes were red and swollen, and she had thought till her senses had become bewildered—but the Doctor having, by her tender aunt's direction, stole softly to the bed-side, and felt her pulse, and heard, over and over again, all the symptoms of her illness, gave his decided opinion that she was not attacked by any serious disorder, but was only enduring that which most country ladies suffered, when first embarking in the irregularity of a town life. Aunt Rachel's fears were relieved by this information, and her niece was suffered to sleep for some hours undisturbed, while she resumed her usual morning's occupation of directing the household affairs, and scolding the servants.

CHAPTER II.

> "Swifter than thought flies by the lucky hour,
> Which lost, returns no more."

Mr. Levison, senior, was a man of immense wealth, and ancient family, who had for many ages been seated in the most picturesque part of Cumberland. The present possessor of that name, and the head of the family to which we have introduced our readers, prided himself much more on the antiquity of his family, than on its wealth. "Chance may enrich the man of base blood," he frequently observed, "but cannot ennoble him;" and as he carried this principle into action, and frequently manifested a degree of contempt towards many of his neighbours, who were not so fortunate as himself in being able to trace their pedigrees to so remote a period as he could, it may be readily conceived that, when resident on his patrimonial estate, he led a very retired and independent sort of life.

It was rumoured, however, that in his youth, and while a younger brother, Mr. Levison had been desperately gay; and it was known that his brother, then the possessor of Levison Hall and the surrounding estates for many miles in extent, had been severely taxed to supply his brother's extravagances.

Alfred Augustus Levison, who at that period was the representative of the family, had, it appeared, much less dignified notions of the advantages of high birth and pure blood, than his brother Charles, the testy old gentleman to whom we have introduced our readers in the preceding chapter. He was arrogant, sometimes, it is true, and occasionally tyrannical, if he was crossed in his views or his wishes; but as those were mostly confined within a narrow compass,—as he limited his ambition to being the best shot, possessing the finest horses and the best pack of hounds in the county, and indulged no feelings that were likely to interfere with the comfort of his neighbours,—he had few enemies; while his hospitality and readiness to join in all the festive sports, even among his inferiors, and promote them by a lavish expenditure of his money, gained him many well-wishers, if not exactly what might be called friends.

Till the age of forty-five, Alfred Levison remained a bachelor, in spite of all the devices that were practised to ensnare his heart, by the fair ones, high and low, in his neighbourhood. There were several females, indeed, of the latter description, who could boast of having attained a temporary influence over him, which, though it did not tend to enhance their reputation, had the effect, generally, of enriching themselves and their relations. But Mr. Levison's time for falling in love had not then, it seemed, arrived—he was about the age we have before mentioned, when he first met with a female who was destined to inspire the tender passion.

He had been attending a festive dinner at the public inn, in a small village distant about ten miles from his

own house, where he had taken even more than his usual allowance of wine. The horse which he rode upon the occasion being a young and spirited animal, to which he was unaccustomed, he had scarcely mounted it, intending to return home, when it suddenly reared, and throwing him forward, his head struck against the gate of the inn-yard.

It was late in the evening, and no surgeon resided within ten miles of the spot—but it was ordained that Mr. Levison should not at this time perish for lack of help. He was taken into the house in a state of utter insensibility, and a man was already despatched express for the doctor, when a stranger, who had that evening driven up to the inn in a single-horse chaise, and engaged a bed for himself, and another for a young lady with him, whom he called his daughter, stepped forward, and, announcing himself as a military surgeon, and therefore properly qualified for the case before him, offered his services.

Of course this offer was gladly accepted, and Mr. Levison, by his directions, accordingly put to bed.

The doctor bled him, and having ascertained that no limbs were broken, pronounced his opinion, that his patient had received a concussion of the brain; and that, though he might do well, the greatest care and attention would be necessary to bring him about again, and to restore him to health.

The event proved the correctness of his judgment. For many days Mr. Levison lingered between life and death, and the stranger delayed his journey, in order that he might continue his services to him. Day and night he watched by his bed-side, and if he left him, for a short

time, to recruit his own strength by some refreshment, his daughter, a beautiful girl about nineteen years of age, regularly supplied his place, administered the medicines, smoothed his uneasy pillow, and listened to and soothed his complaints, with the gentleness of an attached relative, rather than an entire stranger.

Gradually Mr. Levison became fully sensible of the value of these attentions; and, grateful as he felt for the care and skill to which he readily believed he owed the preservation of his life, still warmer were the feelings with which he regarded his beautiful nurse.

Elinor Tyrrell was indeed beautiful—tall, slender, and graceful, her form was symmetry itself, while every movement was replete with elegance. Her complexion, of the clearest olive, was lighted by the bright glow of health, and her lovely mouth, ever smiling, disclosed teeth with which the most exquisite pearls could not compare, while her dark hair clustered in thick natural ringlets over her beautiful forehead, and her large brilliant black eyes beamed with tenderness and feeling.

Such was the being who was (unfortunately, indeed, for her,) ordained to inspire in the bosom of Mr. Levison feelings to which he had been hitherto a stranger.

The father of Elinor was a man who had evidently seen much of the world, and had profited well by its lessons. In him, Mr. Levison found a companion ever pleasant and entertaining, and he began to feel uneasy at the thought that a short time must separate him, probably for ever, from two persons whom he preferred to all whom he had ever known.

But Mr. Tyrrell talked of the speedy continuance of his journey as indispensable, and it was some days before

Mr. Levison could summon courage to inquire further into the circumstances of his new friend.

At length, however, he learned that Mr. Tyrrell, after passing many years abroad in the capacity of an army surgeon, had returned to England on half-pay, and was seeking, with the aid of some friends, to establish himself as a medical practitioner, and was now journeying to a town about fifty miles farther, which had been pointed out to him as offering a fair field for his exertions.

"Could he not be prevailed upon to fix his residence nearer?" thought Mr. Levison; "why not immediately in my own neighbourhood?—my patronage would secure him practice. Our old Esculapius has made sufficient money to retire, and I should not mind sacrificing a trifle, to secure such a benefit as Tyrrell would prove, not only to me, but the whole county."

The proposition was made, and eagerly caught at by Mr. Tyrrell. The horse and chaise in which the latter had travelled was sent back to the friend from whom he had borrowed it, by one of Mr. Levison's own servants, and he and his beautiful daughter accompanied their patient home, as soon as he could bear the motion of a carriage, to remain with him until a house could be procured, and affairs arranged to their satisfaction.

Elinor was delighted with the house, (which was a truly noble mansion)—the park, the shrubberies, the gardens, all were subjects of admiration, and she expressed her feelings with all the warmth and simplicity of childhood. Upon one occasion, when she had been warmly expressing the delight she experienced, Mr. Levison gained sufficient courage to say—

"It is in your power, Miss Tyrrell, to be mistress of

all you see, if you please to take the owner into the bargain."

Mr. Tyrrell was present when this was said, though it was not uttered as if intended for his hearing.

He darted a keen look at his daughter, as he anxiously listened for her reply—but Elinor did not answer; she only cast down her eyes and turned pale, while Mr. Levison, as if abashed at his own temerity, immediately changed the subject, by speaking of some alterations he proposed to make in the dining-room which they were in.

"There wants but one thing in my opinion," said Mr. Tyrrell, "to make it all that could be wished."

"And what is that?" demanded Levison, eagerly.

"Only a lady to preside at the head of the table," returned Tyrrell, laughing.

Mr. Levison smiled too, but said nothing; and Elinor again cast her eyes to the ground, in extreme embarrassment.

During the dinner, her thoughtfulness and gloom were most striking, while her father was exuberantly gay and vivacious.

"Miss Tyrrell is not well, I fear," said Mr. Levison, observing that she did not join in the laugh which her father's *bon mots* occasioned, nor did she even appear to hear them.

"What is the matter, Elinor?" demanded Mr. Tyrrell, affecting for the first time to have observed her pensiveness. "Are you sorry to see our kind friend restored to health and spirits again?"

"Oh no, indeed," replied Elinor, blushing, "Mr. Levison, I am sure, does not think so."

"I should be very ungrateful if I did," observed Levi-

son; "indeed, I can never suspect that Miss Tyrrell is indifferent to my welfare, when I recollect all she has done towards my restoration."

Elinor blushed still deeper—she tried to say that she had done no more than common humanity prompted, but a look from her father restrained her.

The cloth was removed, and Elinor took the first opportunity of retiring to commune with her own heart.

It was long before Mr. Levison and his companion left their wine for the tea-table, and Elinor's anxious eye read immediately in her father's countenance that something more than ordinary had occurred to please him.

His look, as he met Elinor's inquiring glance, spoke volumes; and pale, trembling, and agitated, the unhappy girl sank down upon her chair, without replying to Mr. Levison's anxious inquiry whether she felt better.

"I think I must turn nurse, now," observed Levison, who was evidently elated with wine. "You have made me well—and I must try my skill in curing you."

Elinor murmured an expression of thankfulness for his kind intentions, which she assured him were quite needless, for she was well—quite well.

"If you are not, you ought to be," observed her father, with marked emphasis.

Elinor raised her eyes to his, with a look not merely of reproach—but reproach, contempt, indignation, defiance, all were blended in one fiery glance, and Tyrrell's spirits seemed for a moment daunted, but he quickly recovered himself, and in a tone of levity observed——

"Elinor, I suspect, begins to fancy herself a fine lady, because she has got into a fine house, and thinks it necessary to the character, to be nervous and vapourish—but

we shall soon find means to cure her of that fancy, do not you think we shall, Mr. Levison?"

"If that is all," said Levison, looking tenderly and thoughtfully at her; but Elinor had again sunk into a fit of musing, and did not seem to notice what had been said.

The evening passed away very flatly—Mr. Levison's good spirits gradually faded—he seemed to have caught the contagion of Elinor's gloom—and Tyrrell, though he tried to keep a tone of jovialty, was restless, uneasy, and watchful.

They parted for the night at an earlier hour than common, but Mr. Tyrrell and his daughter did not retire to bed for some hours after Mr. Levison.

"I have something to say to you, Elinor," observed the father, as he led her to the drawing-room door, "go into the garden, and I will follow you in a few minutes."

Elinor's head turned dizzy, and her limbs tottered beneath her, as she descended the staircase.

It was a most beautiful summer evening—the moon was shining in the deep blue sky, without a cloud to intercept its splendour. Not a sound disturbed the stillness, save the soft breath of evening, which wantoned among the shrubs and flowers, and came loaded with a thousand fragrant sweets to salute her: but Elinor was insensible to the beauty of the scene; her heart was throbbing with anguish, and her brain was on fire with indignation, shame, and contempt of her mercenary parent—of him who regarded his child but as the stepping-stone to wealth and distinction. Yes, too well did Elinor anticipate the tale her father had to pour into her unwilling ear, and too well she knew that resistance to his

will would be in vain. She was well aware that neither feeling, justice, nor mercy, dwelt in the bosom of him whom she had the misfortune to call her parent—yet there was one plea, and she clasped her white hands together in agony, as she thought of it—one plea, which might, for his own sake, deter him from urging the hateful project which she knew he was about to communicate.

Elinor was right in her conjecture—for, with little preparation, and less delicacy, Mr. Tyrrell informed her that Mr. Levison had offered to make her the mistress of his hand and fortune.

"Now, I know what you are going to say, Elinor," he continued, preventing her, "but, pray curb your impatience, and listen to me. As to love for Hamerton, I know it is all very natural that you should fancy that you can never love anybody but him, rascally as he has behaved to you. I have known what the feelings of youth are, Elinor, and I can make all allowance—but, believe me, you deceive yourself. I was *in love*, as it is called, two or three times before I was one and twenty—and I fancied, each time, that the goddess of my idolatry was the only one that could make me happy—I married, at last, for *love;* and you know how *supremely* happy your mother and I lived together."

"Do not mention my mother, sir," exclaimed Elinor, with vehemence. "Had my mother lived, I should never have been the wretch I am!"

"Very likely not," said Mr. Tyrrell, drily; "she would have made you a wretch in her own way. She would have married you to some romantic fool, not

worth a shilling, and have had the felicity of seeing you starving, with half a dozen brats around you."

"My mother would have done nothing but what was proper and good," returned Elinor, with increasing indignation. "My mother would never have seen her child sold to shame and misery! Oh, that I were now in the cold and silent grave, in which she rests! Oh, that I could for ever hide——"

"Psha! a truce to these tragedy airs, Miss Tyrrell, if you please," interrupted her father, "and condescend to talk like a rational being—like a sensible girl, as you are; for *you* know, Elinor, and *I* know that you possess ten times more understanding than you have just displayed. What shame have you incurred, that requires so great a sacrifice as your death, in the prime of youth? What's past is past,—and it is known to none but you and I, who are interested in keeping the secret—and who would undoubtedly be the last to publish it. Hamerton is, by this time, some thousands of miles separated from us; and, even if he were to return, he dare not—would not, whisper one word to sully your fame, as the wife of Mr. Levison, should he ever discover you in that character, which is not very probable."

"I can never become the wife of Mr. Levison," said Elinor, firmly. "I am not going to plead my aversion to such a union, therefore hear me out, sir, before you begin to utter that rage which I see is ready to break forth against me. I am not going to plead the disparity of our ages, my utter inability to love him, or any of those pleas which I might, and with good reason, urge against it; but there is another, an unanswerable objection, which even you, with all your sophistry, cannot

answer—I am," and she hid her face with her hands, while her voice became almost inarticulate with agony, "I am in that state which will bring a living witness into the world of my disgrace, and—and—the cruelty of those who plotted my ruin."

"It is a lie! a base and infamous lie!" exclaimed Tyrrell, grasping her arm with violence. "I will not believe it. It is a plan fabricated to defeat the fair prospects that have opened both for myself and you."

"No, so help me, Heaven!" she exclaimed, sinking on her knees, and raising her hands in solemn adjuration.

The moonbeams fell full upon her beautiful countenance—her face was ghastly pale, and Mr. Tyrrell, after gazing at her for a moment in silence, raised her in his arms from the ground.

"My poor girl!" he observed, in a soothing tone, "I have been rash and unjust. I see that you are impressed with the belief of what you have told me, and I can account for all that has made me angry in your conduct this day: but, trust me, Elinor, your fears alone have raised this bugbear, to affright you from the path to fortune and distinction. But if it be so, Elinor, do not grieve, my child—I am poor, it is true—you know how poor—yet we must do the best we can, to screen you from the world's contempt, and provide for the poor infant. But we will not talk of this now—keep up your spirits, my girl, and, above all things, do not discourage Levison's suit to you. It will be the means, perhaps, of inducing him to withhold those favours he is about to confer upon me, and I have now a double reason to be careful to improve his friendship, since he alone can furnish the means to provide for my poor

girl, should the worst come to the worst. But go in, my Elinor, and retire to rest—we will not too readily yield to despair—only again, I entreat you, be cautious how you conduct yourself towards Mr. Levison—for on that depends your welfare, as well as mine."

Elinor retired, but not to rest—her mind, though in part relieved of a heavy burthen, was yet tormented with a thousand fears and dismal forebodings, but the bitterness of her feelings towards her father had evaporated, and she felt more calm than she had done for many hours before.

"Heaven forgive him!" she exclaimed, "and strengthen that parental feeling, which I had begun to believe had no place in his heart. It may be, that I have wronged him—and that all he has done, was from a mistaken hope of advancing my interest. Yet Hamerton's last words were, to caution me against my father—but ought I to believe the assertions of one, who proved himself lost to all principles of honour and humanity? Oh, Frederic, it is on you the guilt will fall, whatever may be my crimes, or my errors!"

CHAPTER III.

And I will forth, and flee away
From out my ain countrie;
There beams no sun—there comes no day
Within this land for me.—*Anon.*

ALTHOUGH Elinor, like her father, was fiery and vindictive, yet was she easily accessible to persuasion and gentleness, and, little as he deserved it, truly solicitous for her father's welfare. She was not insensible, too, to her own interest; and having experienced the bitter evils of poverty, she trembled at the thought of again being exposed to them. The little that her father possessed, she knew would be insufficient even to answer his own demands; and she felt, therefore, even while she contemned her father's councils, the necessity of acting up to them.

On her next meeting with Mr. Levison, she showed no reluctance to listen to his suit, except such as might easily be attributed to maiden modesty, which

"Would be wooed, and not unsought be won."

But Mr. Tyrrell's deep-laid projects did not end in merely retaining Mr. Levison's temporary friendship—by degrees Elinor was brought to listen to, debate, and finally to assist in, his nefarious plans for imposing upon their warm-hearted and incautious benefactor.

Tyrrell could no longer persuade either himself or his

daughter that her fears were unfounded—she was evidently in a situation which must produce a disclosure of her shame—yet such was the influence her father had acquired over her, and such the plausibility of the arguments he adduced, to a mind more than half corrupted by constant exposure to his sophistical doctrines, that the once candid, open-hearted Elinor consented to become a systematic deceiver, and assist to betray the unsuspecting Levison into ruin.

Before the end of six weeks from their first meeting, Mr. Levison led Elinor Tyrrell to the hymeneal altar, to the astonishment of all his friends and neighbours, and the great scandal of all the ladies, young and old, who had at different times flattered themselves that they stood a fair chance of overcoming his avowed aversion to matrimony. The young were astonished that a girl of nineteen, who had some pretensions to beauty, could be so mad as to sacrifice herself to an old, disagreeable fellow, merely for the sake of his money; while ladies of a certain age wondered that a man who was considered so shrewd and penetrating as Mr. Levison, should be ensnared by an artful chit, whose age and beauty were at all events questionable. Mr. Levison, however, was too fully occupied with his new-born happiness, to concern himself about what the world said of him, or his conduct.

The honeymoon passed away, and Mr. Tyrrell began to talk of taking possession of the handsome house which had been engaged for him; but Elinor was seized with a slight indisposition, and as Mr. Tyrrell whispered to Mr. Levison that it was indicative of a circumstance highly interesting to his feelings as a husband, the former was

implored not to leave them, but remain and watch over Elinor's health.

The plea of indisposition was a sufficient excuse for Mrs. Levison's declining to receive the ladies of the neighbourhood; and the festivities attending their marriage were entirely confined to Mr. Levison's tenants. But although the latter, one and all, declared that their new lady, of whom they had a transient glance, was the most beautiful and gracious creature that ever was seen, and though Mr. Levison declared to some of his most intimate acquaintance, (who had joked him on the subject of his submitting to wear the yoke of matrimony,) that he never knew what happiness was, till he became a husband—yet strange and mysterious whispers were soon in circulation respecting the new-married pair; and it was confidently predicted, by those who had or affected to have the best information on the subject, that a storm was gathering, which would effectually destroy the present happiness at Levison Hall.

Too soon were these predictions verified—Elinor's frequent violent attacks, which confined her to her chamber for the most part of her time, began to make the doting husband tremble, not only for her life, but her reason; since she sometimes acted and spoke with such strange inconsistency, that her attendants were frequently seriously alarmed; and his old housekeeper scrupled not to declare to him, in private, that she was fearful the sweet young creature was at times lunatic, and ought to have a watch set over her, lest she should do any thing to injure herself and the baby, which she was much afraid would never see the light of the world, if the poor mother continued in her present state.

"But are such things usual in her situation, Williams?" inquired Mr. Levison, in a tone of distress.

The old woman had heard of such things, and she repeated two or three stories on the subject; but then it always proved that there was some hidden cause for the disease—in one, it was that they had been forced into a marriage with a person they hated—in another, the fear of not being able to provide for the coming offspring—and, in a third, from a consciousness of guilt, in imposing upon a husband the spurious offspring of illicit love.

"Psha! but none of these cases can apply to your mistress;" said Mr. Levison, impatiently.

"No, no—to be sure not," returned the old lady, casting down her eyes, with a sort of hesitation and perplexity, which struck Mr. Levison with surprise, indignation, and horror.

"Williams, you know or suspect more than you are willing to say," he at last uttered with difficulty; "you have been fifty years in my family—you nursed me, and loved me as your own, and I have ever been kind and respectful to you—If, then, there is any thing concealed from me—if you know any thing of the secret cause—and yet you cannot, I am sure you cannot, dare not suspect—I know not what I am saying, Williams—you have distracted me, and I insist, I command, that you instantly tell me what you know, or fancy you know."

"The Lord have mercy upon me!" exclaimed the poor old woman; "don't look so wild, for you terrify me as bad as that poor young creature terrified me, while I was watching by her last night."

"What did she say? what did she do?" demanded Levison, gasping for breath.

"Why, it might be a dream—for her father had given her a sleeping-draught, and had waited to see her, as he thought, asleep; but whether she was or was not, when I coughed, she fancied that it was him, and she said,

"'It is no use going on in this way any longer—I would sooner, at once, confess it all to him, and trust to his mercy to provide for me and the wretched child, than live to face that dreadful hour——' and then she added, in such an awful tone—'I shall die, I know I shall—I saw my mother in a dream last night, and she looked so sternly at me; and when I stretched out my arms to her, she shook her head and vanished—and I saw in her place a coffin with my name upon it, not *his* name! Oh, no, he will not let me bear that, even in the grave; and yet I think that he will mourn for me, wretch as I am!'"

Mr. Levison hid his face, and burst into tears; they were the first he had shed since he had attained the age of manhood, but they had not the effect of allaying the tempest that raged in his bosom; and the old woman, frightened at what she had done, sobbed in concert.

"I will be satisfied, before I sleep!" he at length exclaimed, rising in a violent passion. "Williams, I charge you, be silent as to what you have heard—It may, I pray fervently it may—be all the effects of delirium; but, for my sake, if you value me, do not tell any one your suspicions."

"I would not say a word for the whole world," returned the old woman, still weeping. "I'm sure I love the poor thing, as if she was my own; and whenever I've heard any hints thrown out among the servants, I've always——"

"So public, too," interrupted Mr. Levison, starting;

"how have I slumbered all this while, or what infatuation has so long blinded me?"

"That's just what that saucy slut, the housemaid that I sent about her business last week, said in my hearing to one of the men—And, to tell the truth, that remark, and not carelessness or untidiness, was the cause of her being turned away."

"What did she say, then?" demanded Levison, anxiously.

"Why, she said that she wondered how master could be so blind, as not to see that he was imposed upon, and would have an heir long before he had any right to expect one."

Levison clenched his hands, and gnashed his teeth.

"And I am the last to hear this!" he exclaimed. "I am the only one who could not see that I have been cheated, fooled, betrayed—made even the jest of my own servants—the laughing-stock of the whole world."

"Oh, no! I'm sure every body pities you," said the poor old woman. "I was asked by Madam Askew, last Sunday, as I was coming from church——"

"Do not, for heaven's sake, do not torture me any longer!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, in agony. "Where is Tyrrell?—I will see him this moment, and demand satisfaction of my doubts."

"He is with my mistress in her dressing-room," replied the housekeeper; "but, for heaven's sake, don't go to be rash, my dear master, for your own sake, and the poor young creature's. Heaven knows best the secrets of all hearts—but I *do* think that she is greatly to be pitied."

Mr. Levison rushed from the room, intending imme-

diately to seek Mr. Tyrrell, and boldly acquaint him with the suspicions which had been excited in his bosom; but, as he was passing by an open window, he beheld the father and daughter, arm-in-arm, coming up the long avenue towards the house, and Elinor looked so lovely, yet so fragile, as she leant on the supporting arm of her father, and she smiled so sweetly, and kissed her hand to him with such apparent affection, as he stood gazing at her, that his resolution faltered.

"I will not, cannot do it, in her presence," he murmured to himself. "I will watch her narrowly through the day, and, if I see aught to confirm my suspicions, I will, when she has retired to her chamber, at once accuse her."

Mr. Levison, however, was but a novice in deception. He tried to appear easy and kind as usual, and, when they entered the house, he attempted to utter his pleasure at seeing her so much recovered, but the words died in his throat, and he turned away, unable to speak—for Elinor at that moment threw off the long cloak in which she had been wrapped, and, as she did so, she betrayed that there was quite sufficient alteration in her appearance, to warrant the observations of his servants.

Elinor darted a look of consternation at her father, as her husband turned away.

"What can have happened?" she observed, in a voice of alarm; "we are betrayed!"

"No, no—do not think so—something has disturbed him—but it is impossible it can be that!" returned Tyrrell. "At any rate, keep up your spirits, and trust to my prudence. Go, and dress for dinner—you know he likes to see you looking well."

Elinor retired to her dressing-room, and took unusual trouble to decorate herself, though she was so dreadfully agitated that she could scarcely stand.

The dinner-bell rang, and she descended the stairs; but no Mr. Levison came to meet her, as was his usual custom, and conduct her to the head of the table. On the contrary, Mr. Tyrrell was alone, when she entered. He glanced his eyes anxiously upon Elinor as she took a seat at the table, but not a word was uttered by either.

At length Mr. Levison entered the dining-room, he made a confused apology for being so late, and immediately took his place at the table.

"Has any thing unpleasant occurred to vex you, sir?" inquired Tyrrell.

"Yes—no—yes—I have been rather—rather vexed," replied Levison with hesitation, "but it is of no consequence," and he began to help himself, without apparently noticing Elinor's presence.

"What will you take, my dear?" inquired Mr. Tyrrell, speaking unusually loud.

Mr. Levison seemed suddenly to recollect himself—but he did not even raise his eyes to Elinor's face, as he said—

"I beg your pardon—shall I send you some salmon?"

Elinor replied in the affirmative, and silence again prevailed, until Mr. Tyrrell interrupted it, by some remark on the quality of the dish he was eating of.

Levison, however, did not reply—his mind seemed totally abstracted from what was passing around him, and he continued eating, without seeming to know that he was doing so.

Once, only, did Elinor's eyes encounter his—she spoke

in a low tone to her father, and, as if roused by the sound of her voice, Mr. Levison suddenly darted a look of inquiry towards her; but he instantly withdrew his eyes, with a sort of shudder, and almost immediately afterwards pushed his plate, which he had just filled, with violence from him, and throwing himself back in his chair, uttered a deep groan.

Tyrrell and his daughter both arose—"You are not well, sir," said the latter, in a trembling voice, as she approached him.

"Oh, yes, well—quite well!" he exclaimed, starting up, as if to avoid her coming near him. "I am quite well, indeed—but this room is insufferably hot and close—I cannot bear it!" and he rushed towards the door.

"For Heaven's sake, what is the matter, Mr. Levison?" exclaimed Tyrrell, hastily following him. "You alarm us dreadfully—look at Elinor—she is ready to faint."

Mr. Levison, however, did not venture to cast a single glance towards her.

"I will explain what is the matter, Mr. Tyrrell, when I return, which will be when Mrs. ———when your daughter has retired."

The servants looked at each other in silent consternation.

"I will follow my master, if you please, sir," said the butler, quitting his place at the side-board. "I have been many years in his service, but never saw him before in this way: and I am afraid ——"

"You can do as you please," replied Tyrrell, coolly; "but I do not think there is any necessity for it."

The man, however, did not wait for further permission, and Elinor, after a vain attempt to recover herself

sufficiently to resume her seat at the table, said, in a low voice—

"I had better go to my room, sir."

"I will conduct you," said Mr. Tyrrell, still preserving his coolness of manner, though his countenance betrayed the inward workings of his mind.

"Ring for Mrs. Levison's maid," he observed to the footman, as he quitted the room, with his daughter leaning on his arm. "I shall return and finish my dinner in a minute."

"Elinor," he observed, as he led her to the staircase, "this is the crisis of our fate—we are suspected! But be firm, and do not betray yourself and me!"

Elinor could not utter a single word in reply. With difficulty she reached the door of her chamber, and when her maid, a few moments after, entered it, she found her lying on the floor in a fainting fit. Before, however, the servant had time to summon assistance, she unclosed her eyes, and looked wildly round the room.

"I am very ill, Anne," she observed, "but do not alarm any one—help me to pull off this finery, and get me to bed."

The servant entreated her to allow her to call Mr. Tyrrell—but she exclaimed, with impatience,

"No—no, I do not want him. I shall be better in bed, and he has enough—quite enough——."

The remainder of the sentence was uttered so indistinctly, that Anne, anxious as she was to understand it, could not comprehend its purport. She perceived, however, that it was of no use to oppose her mistress's determination, and the terrified girl, who was warmly attached to her unfortunate mistress, hastened to comply

with her orders. In a short time, Anne had completed her task, and Elinor closed her eyes.

"You may go, now, Anne," she observed, "I feel inclined to sleep."

Anne felt unwilling to leave her, but her mistress repeated the order, and she went to relate what had occurred, and comment upon it in the servant's hall. But there, too, all was consternation and dismay. Mr. Levison had struck the butler for daring to follow him into the garden, and offering to condole with him. The old man, divided between pity and anger, was loud and bitter in his condemnation of those whose misdeeds had so transformed a good master.

"But it will all come out, now," he continued, "for master has gone back to the dining-room, and I heard him turn the key of the door, as soon as he went in, as if he had made up his mind that Mr. Tyrrell should not leave the room till he was satisfied."

"My poor mistress," said Anne, despondingly; "I am afraid it will go hard with her—oh, if you had but seen her, Mr. Thomas—how like a corpse she looks—her face whiter than the pillow it lies on—her beautiful eyes looking as if they had two black rings round them, and her sweet mouth, which always speaks so kind and gentle——"

"There—there—that's enough, girl!" interrupted old Thomas, impatiently. "It is that beauty which has been the ruin of us all,—for I don't scruple to say my master is a ruined man—he'll never be himself again."

"Hark! what noise is that?" exclaimed one of the men-servants. "Surely, it was in the dining-parlour.

I hope my master will not be rash. Mr. Tyrrell is a very determined man, and if he is made desperate——"

The affrighted servants crowded to the door of the hall to listen; but no sound was heard, and convinced their fears had deceived them, they again returned to their seats.

An hour elapsed without any order being issued from the parlour—one by one the servants crept to the door to listen; but no sound was heard within, and at length the butler proposed that one of the women-servants should venture, as if accidentally, to pass by the windows, which looked upon a terrace-walk, and endeavour to ascertain what was passing within the room.

No one except Anne, Mrs. Levison's maid, would venture upon this experiment; but she, however, after a few moments' hesitation consented. Some time must necessarily expire before she could return, and this period was passed in breathless suspense by the rest of the party.

At length she rushed into the room, pale as death, and scarcely able to utter a word, in answer to their eager inquiries.

"I have seen her ghost! it cannot be her!" she exclaimed. "But yet it looked like her—and who else could it be?"

"Who? what does the foolish girl mean?" demanded the butler, impatiently. "Where is my master?—where is Mr. Tyrrell?—did you see *them?*"

"No, no," she returned, "I did not get so far—for I had just mounted the terrace-steps, when I saw a tall figure, just like my mistress, all in white, glide from one of the windows, and come towards me. I instantly ran back as fast as I could, though it did not strike me, until

Mr. Levison lay on the floor in strong convulsions, &c.

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I got into the hall, how impossible it was it could be my mistress, whom I left in bed so ill."

At this moment the bell in the dining-parlour rang violently, and two or three of the servants rushed simultaneously to obey its call.

Mr. Levison lay on the floor in strong convulsions, and Mr. Tyrrell knelt by his side, administering some restorative.

"Your master's strange conduct is now accounted for," he observed, to the butler. "This attack has menaced him for some hours, and the violent pressure on the brain has completely deranged him. The effects of the fall from his horse will, I fear, after all, prove fatal to him."

The servants now crowded into the room, and Mr. Levison was removed to a sofa. Bleeding and other means were tried by Mr. Tyrrell, but he never discovered the least sign of recollection or sensibility; and, in less than an hour from the time Mr. Tyrrell had summoned assistance, the unfortunate Levison breathed his last.

"Where is my daughter?" inquired Mr. Tyrrell, as he stood gazing on the lifeless corpse. "This sad event must be concealed from her, for, in her delicate state of health and situation, it may have a fatal effect upon her."

"Does she not already know it?" said the butler, fixing his eyes firmly upon him. "She was here in the room with you, a few moments before you called for assistance."

Mr. Tyrrell started.

"Here! my daughter here!" he exclaimed. "What is it you mean?"

"Her own maid saw her enter the terrace from that window," returned the butler, pointing to the unclosed window, which opened to the ground.

"No, no!" exclaimed Anne, eagerly; "I did not say it was her—I told you it looked more like a spirit than a living person, though I thought it was my mistress."

"That is your mistress's bell now ringing, if I mistake not," said Mr. Tyrrell, listening. "Go to her, girl; and, for heaven's sake, act with prudence; and do not alarm her, either with what has happened, or the effects of your imagination—for such it must have been, that led you to suppose you saw your mistress here."

Anne quitted the room to obey the summons. In a few moments, Mrs. Williams, the housekeeper, was sent for to her mistress's room, and, in a very short time, it was whispered among the servants, that a strange event was likely to occur before the night was over.

The predictions of the experienced housekeeper, though Mr. Tyrrell affected at first to disregard them, were verified. Before the morning dawned, Mrs. Levison had given birth to twin children—a boy and a girl—who, in spite of his (Mr. Tyrrell's) assertions that the birth was premature, and occasioned by the shock his daughter had received, were both fine, full-grown, healthy children—a fact which the *sage femme* of the adjacent village, who had been summoned at Elinor's own request, did not hesitate openly to declare to the females around her.

Affecting to be wholly overcome by the melancholy circumstance of Mr. Levison's death, Mr. Tyrrell, having sent for that gentleman's steward, and, in his presence, affixed seals to the escritoir, and every place in

which it was supposed money or writings were deposited, retired to his own chamber, having first visited his daughter's bed-side, and spoken to her for a few moments, in a tone so low, as not to be heard by the females who were in the apartment.

The patience and mildness of Mrs. Levison during this trying scene, increased the pity and sorrow with which she was beheld by those around her; yet these feelings could not blind them to the undeniable evidence of her criminality, in having imposed upon her husband, nor could they entirely subdue a suspicion of a much darker nature, which frequently made them shudder.

"Is it not wonderful that she has never once mentioned my master, not even to ask if he was informed of her illness?" observed Anne, in a whisper to Mrs. Williams.

The old woman shook her head, mysteriously.

"It has a bad—a black look," she observed, "I hope things may not turn out yet worse than they now are, and that my poor master come by his end fairly; but if it was really her whom you saw come out of the dining-parlour, it will be hard for her to clear herself."

Anne wrung her hands in agony.—"Oh, how I wish my tongue had been cut out, before I had ever said it, if it should bring her to any harm—but I did not say it was her—I only thought it was like her, and if I was put to my oath——"

"There is one thing which is quite sufficient to prove that it was her, Anne. You helped to undress her, and put her into bed before you came down stairs, you told me."

"And so I did," replied Anne. "Oh merciful good-

ness, I see it all now. When we came up stairs to her, she was half-dressed, and her white wrapper laid on the chair, that I left in the dressing-room before dinner."

"That's just what I was going to say," returned the old woman, "and we must be very careful, you know, what we *do* say—for, you may depend upon it, we shall all be put to our oaths—I heard the butler say, he should go to the coroner directly, and have the body opened; and if he does, I am afraid——"

Anne shuddered with horror, at the dreadful ideas that crossed her mind; but Elinor at that moment unclosed her eyes and looked around her—and, forgetful of every thing but her anxiety to administer to her mistress's comfort, the poor girl flew to the bed-side, and inquired if she could assist her, or give her any thing.

Elinor shook her head mournfully—"No, my good girl, nothing—I want nothing in *this* world," she replied.

"But, my dear lady, you must take some nourishment," said the warm-hearted girl; "consider how many, many hours it is since you have taken any thing but a sup of water, and if you go on so, you will die."

"Die!" repeated her mistress, in a low and solemn tone—"oh, how welcome would death be now!"

"Yes, madam," observed the old housekeeper, "you might, perhaps, not dread death. Heaven grant you may be prepared for it! though the best of us can make but a poor preparation for such an awful time—but, if you die, what is to become of these poor dear babes. They have no——"

She stopped, checked by Anne's reproachful looks.

"They have no father to provide for them—that is

what you meant to say, was it not, Mrs. Williams?' demanded Elinor, with quickness, and raising herself, with almost supernatural strength, on her pillow. "Nay, do not shrink from telling me all! Tell me that Mr. Levison discards, detests, abhors the wretch——I will go instantly—I will leave the house—I will not stay till he spurns me! I can beg with them, with these poor——"

She sank back, exhausted; and Anne with tears reproached Mrs. Williams for her cruelty.

Elinor heard and understood her, though she could not speak; but she grasped with fervency Anne's hand, which held one of her cold ones within it.

Anne's tears redoubled, as she continued to gaze upon the pale marble-like face of her mistress, while mentally she exclaimed—

"I would almost die to serve her, even if she were as guilty as that old woman pretends to believe her—but she is innocent—I am sure she is innocent of that foul crime; and as to the other, who can tell how she may have been deluded and deceived—we are none of us our own keepers, and happy are they whom God keeps!"

Exhausted by long suffering, Elinor sank at last into a deep slumber, and her two attendants resumed their conversation on the dreadful and mysterious event of the preceding evening, and the probable fate of their unfortunate mistress.

On the former, they were both decidedly agreed that Mr. Levison had been unfairly brought to his end; but, with regard to Mrs. Levison's participation in, or knowledge of the deed, they were quite at variance; Anne

persisting that she was sure she was as innocent of it as herself, while Mrs. Williams, with all the pertinacity of age, industriously brought together every circumstance which could militate against her unhappy mistress.

The debate grew so warm between them, that their voices insensibly were raised beyond the bounds of prudence, and Anne's triumphant observation——

"Besides, it must be plain to you that she does not know he is dead, when she talked just now of his turning her and her children out to starve," reached the ears of the apparently sleeping Elinor.

"Who is dead?" she exclaimed, in a tone that made them both start; "why do you look at each other without answering me?" she continued. "Where is my father? why does he not come to me?—But I will know what has happened!"

She made an attempt to throw herself out of the bed, but was prevented by Anne, who, considering it best, as she observed, to put an end to her suspense, at once informed her that Mr. Levison had been seized with a fit, before he rose from the table, which had, in a short time, terminated his existence.

Elinor stared wildly at her, while she was speaking—

"Are you sure that is the truth?" she observed, "or are you concealing something worse from me?"

"Worse, Ma'am!" exclaimed Mrs. Williams, angrily; "what can be worse than the sudden death of your husband?"

"My husband!" repeated Elinor,—"true—he was my husband. I ought to mourn for him, but I have so much to mourn for."

"Aye, heaven knows you have cause enough to

mourn!" observed the old woman, "but it is well if this is not the worst cause for mourning that you have yet met with."

Elinor looked earnestly at her, but her thoughts seemed wandering to other subjects, and without again adverting to the information she had received respecting Mr. Levison's death, she began to talk incoherently of a long journey she was about to take, and the preparations that were necessary for it.

It was soon very evident, that the agitation of her mind had produced a fever, and about midnight, Anne became so much alarmed, that she judged it proper to call up Mr. Tyrrell. The servant whom she despatched for this purpose, returned, however, after having been a considerable time absent, to say that he found it impossible to rouse that gentleman, or obtain any answer to his repeated calls and knockings, and he was really afraid that something serious had happened.

"Lord preserve us!" exclaimed Anne; "surely he has never made away with himself, from fear that he should be called to account for my poor master's death."

After a few minutes' consideration, she determined on sending for the butler, who was one of the watchers in the chamber of death.

Thomas scarcely had patience to hear her out, before he flew to Mr. Tyrrell's room. But all his efforts to obtain an answer were in vain, and without further delay he desired some of the servants to fetch the necessary tools to break open the door.

The order was punctually executed, and in a few minutes they entered, and found the room was empty—its late inhabitant was flown.

At first it was supposed his absence was intended to be only temporary; but a further investigation proved that this supposition was not correct, for he had evidently removed all that was valuable, and indeed it appeared nearly certain, that his departure could not have been the result of a momentary impulse, but must have been some time in contemplation, or he must have had an assistant, as the whole of his clothes, &c. were gone.

His secret flight, however, at such a moment, fully confirmed the suspicions even of those who had before been doubtful that he had been accessary to Mr. Levison's death.

The first thought that occurred was, that he ought to be pursued; but second consideration told them, that, without any plea for such a proceeding, except their vague suspicions, it would be hazardous for them to do so.

"The coroner will be here in the morning," observed the butler; "and it will be for him to decide what will be proper; and if he thinks there has been foul play, he will soon send a hue-and-cry after him, that will find him out, if he's in the country. However, we must keep a strict look-out that *she* don't make off, too."

"There is no fear of that, Mr. Thomas," observed Anne, indignantly; "for I do not believe she will ever quit this house, until she is carried to her grave."

For some days Anne's predictions seemed but too likely to be verified, as Mrs. Levison lingered in a state between life and death; in the mean time, the investigation into the cause of her husband's death had terminated in pronouncing that he had died from the effects of poison, suspected to have been administered to him by Martin

Tyrrell; and, in consequence of this decision, a warrant was issued for the apprehension of the latter.

It cannot be supposed that the wretched Elinor escaped suspicion of being concerned in this dreadful tragedy, but her melancholy situation, and the hourly probability of her death, induced those who would, in other circumstances, have considered it necessary to have included her in the accusation, to decline all inquiry into her conduct for the present.

In about ten days from the period of Mr. Charles Levison's death, his brother, who had at the time been absent in France, arrived at the Hall, and Anne began to tremble more than ever for her unfortunate mistress, whose disorder had attained a favourable crisis, and who now seemed likely to recover, only to meet more awful evils than those which had heretofore threatened her.

Mr. Charles Levison was naturally prone to suspicion, but, even had he not been so, there was, unfortunately, quite sufficient in the reports that reached him respecting his sister-in-law, to awaken in his bosom the utmost hatred and disgust.

He had never seen her, and therefore her beauty, her youth, the fascination of her manners, and that gentleness and kindness of disposition which in every instance had characterised her, though often dwelt upon by those who spoke of her to him, weighed as nothing in the balance against the crimes of which she was guilty, and he was inexorably resolved to await only her sufficient recovery, in order that he might formally accuse her of being accessary to his brother's death.

The two children, for whom a nurse had been provided by Mrs. Williams, from among the wives of the

cottagers on the estate, were, immediately upon his arrival, ordered to be taken out of the house, and removed to the house of their attendant, and Mr. Charles Levison made no secret of his intentions towards the unhappy mother, should she survive her disorder.

Night and day were the thoughts and meditations of the simple and warm-hearted attendant of Elinor employed, in considering the means of enabling her mistress to escape the ignominy and punishment of being committed to a common prison—a fate which she saw, from the moment Elinor showed signs of returning health, too surely awaited her.

"I know that they never can prove her guilty," she observed, to the only person of whom she dare make a confidant, "because she is *not* guilty; and therefore they must acquit her. But she will die of sorrow and shame, if she is brought to public trial—and, then, what will become of her poor children?"

The person to whom this was addressed, was a young man, the son of a small farmer, who had long been warmly attached to Anne, and was most willing to aid her in any project to serve the unhappy Mrs. Levison, whose kindness and benevolence he had had several opportunities of witnessing, among the poor in the neighbourhood.

When she regained her recollection, Elinor was not so much surprised as grieved on being informed that her children had been sent away; but, while she trembled whenever she heard the name of Mr. Charles Levison mentioned, and seemed to dread the possibility of seeing him as the greatest evil that could befal her, it was very plain to her anxious attendant that no suspicion of the

heavy charge which hovered over her, entered her mind.

The absence of her father she considered as the natural consequence of Mr. Levison's arrival, for she could not expect he would remain to face the brother of the man whom he had assisted to dishonour and deceive; and that he had neglected to communicate to her his present residence also, did not surprise her; for she was but too well convinced, from his general conduct towards her, that it would be the last thing that he would think of, to embarrass himself with any care for her, now that she could no longer be made subservient to his advantage. But by degrees the whole fatal truth was communicated to her, and she beheld with horror the predicament in which she was placed, by his flight.

The feelings with which Mr. Levison regarded her, were soon no secret; but, instead of reducing her to despair, as Anne expected, his obdurate and unjust conduct, as she termed it, seemed to have the effect of rousing all her energies.

"Hard-hearted man!" she exclaimed, "he shall never have the opportunity of triumphing over me!"

Anne uttered a fervent prayer that he never might. "But how is it to be avoided, dear lady, unless you could get away from here, without their knowledge? And you are so weak, that you could not walk to the park-gates."

"And if I could walk to the park-gates," said Elinor, who saw that something was meant by this observation, more than met the ear, "what good is likely to result from such exertion?"

With fear and trembling, Anne unfolded a plan which

had been discussed between her sweetheart William Powell, and herself, though with little hope of being able to effect it.

William was in the habit of passing the gate of Mr. Levison's park early every Saturday morning, on his way to the next town, with the produce of the farm, to dispose of in the market; and it had occurred to him and Anne, that could Mrs. Levison reach the spot, and bear the jolting of the cart, he might convey her to the town without much fear of detection. From thence, a coach to London started about the time he would expect to arrive there; and if she could immediately secure a place in it, she might be almost at her journey's end before her escape was discovered at the Hall.

"And when you are once in London," said Anne, in conclusion, "William says you would be safe—for he tells me it is such a great place, and there are so many people there, that nobody takes any notice of strangers, as they do here in the country."

Elinor knew that her only chance of concealment certainly would be in the metropolis, but she shuddered at the thoughts of such a journey, in her weak, wretched, and unprotected condition. There was, however, no alternative between this and the disgrace of a prison.

The prospect seemed to renovate Elinor's strength hourly, but, in pursuance of their plan, she affected to be seized with a relapse of her disorder; and again took to her bed, at such hours as she was likely to be seen by any of the servants, though there was only one or two of them who occasionally supplied Anne's place

few minutes—Mrs. Williams never entering the

room, except when sent by Mr. Levison, to ascertain the state of his intended victim's health.

At the hours when freed from the dangers of these visits, Elinor exercised her strength in walking up and down her own and the adjoining room; and having at length convinced herself and Anne that she was able to reach the appointed spot, she began to make ready for the journey. A change or two of clothes, all the jewels with which Mr. Levison had presented her on her marriage, and nearly fifty pounds, which he had also given her as her first quarter's private allowance, were packed up, and secretly conveyed by Anne to her lover, on the night preceding the time appointed for the attempt. Several articles of value, and all the remainder of her clothes, she would have given to Anne; but the poor girl represented to her the danger that would come to her, were they known to be in her possession, and she was, therefore, compelled to leave them, for Mr. Levison to dispose of as he thought proper.

Every thing favoured the execution of their project. The morning was fine, and not a creature was stirring in the house, when, with trembling steps, the two females stole down the back staircase, and entered the park. Elinor shed torrents of tears as she walked for the last time through the shrubberies, but the tender-hearted Anne supported and consoled her.

William was in anxious expectation awaiting them, and Elinor, after silently embracing the kind-hearted girl, who uttered a thousand blessings and prayers for her safety, was assisted by her conductor to seat herself on the straw in the bottom of the cart.

Anne remained gazing after them, until a turning in

the road hid them from her view, and then hastily returned home, to prepare for the arduous trial that awaited her.

It cannot be supposed, that, in thus apparently deserting her children, and leaving them to the mercy of one who could not be expected to feel much compassion for them, Elinor did not undergo a severe struggle with her feelings; but Anne had already seen enough of Mr. Levison's disposition to be convinced, that, vindictive as he felt towards the mother, from the impression which existed in his mind of her enormous guilt, those feelings did not extend to the poor infants, whom he had often spoken of, in terms of the greatest pity. He had also shown himself very solicitous for their comfort, and had had them removed, with their nurse, to a more comfortable and commodious cottage, and had very liberally provided every thing that Mrs. Williams considered necessary.

"My brother would have done so, I am convinced, if he had lived," he observed, "and I will act as he would have done," was his reply to Mrs. Williams, when she observed that there was no need to go to any great expense.

"If he would do so much, while intending nothing but the bitterest revenge against the mother," argued Anne, "there could be no fear but he would continue to provide for them, when she was gone."

Anne was no great casuist, but her arguments, added to the necessity of the case, prevailed, and Elinor, as we have seen, left her children to Mr. Levison's charity.

She did not, however, do this without forming a reserve in her own mind, that time and fortune might

enable her, if she lived, at some future period to reclaim them; and that expectation, as well as the desire to make, if possible, an impression on Mr. Levison's mind in her favour, induced her to pass the last day of her residence under the same roof with him, in writing a full and unvarnished narrative of the events that had led to her present degradation and misery.

This she enclosed, and left directed for him on her dressing-table.

From that period, neither the unhappy Elinor or her father was ever heard of in Cumberland.

Mr. Levison's rage, at finding she had escaped his meditated vengeance, was at first most violent; and Anne, with all her imaginary prudence and precaution, became immediately the object of his suspicions.

Terrified by his threats, that she should be immediately committed to prison, and tried as an accessary, unless she confessed how long her mistress had been absent, and where she was concealed, the poor girl at length acknowledged that she had been gone ever since the preceding morning, and she believed had proceeded by the mail to London; but, though she confessed that she had seen her as far as the gate of the domain, neither promises nor threats could draw from her any farther clue; and Mr. Levison considering this account as untrue, and not believing it possible that one, who had been represented to him as little removed from a dying state, could have attempted such a journey, renounced all attempt at pursuit in the direction pointed out, and contented himself with having the strictest search made in the neighbourhood, in which he judged she was for the present concealed.

We need not say how fruitless this search proved, but it will perhaps a little surprise our readers to learn, that no one, not even Anne herself, so much rejoiced at the unhappy woman's escape, as Mr. Levison.

The fact, however, was, that the pathetic narrative she had addressed to him, had totally changed his feelings towards her; and though he felt the policy of concealing it from the world, he would have sacrificed half his fortune, to have been able to have shielded and protected her from the perils and miseries to which he felt she must be exposed.

To Anne alone, whose fidelity to her unfortunate mistress had exalted her in his eyes beyond all praise, he candidly avowed these sentiments; and, while the warm-hearted girl took credit to herself for her judgment in having always believed Elinor to have been innocent of intentional and premeditated crime, he listened patiently to her reproaches for having, by his severity, driven the poor creature forth a wanderer on the face of the earth.

It was a matter of no little wonder and speculation, among not only her fellow domestics, but many of a higher class, that when, about twelve months after these tragical events, Anne thought fit to reward the constancy of her sweetheart, William Powell, with her fair hand, Mr. Levison not only put him into a good farm, but furnished the house for them, and gave away the bride himself; and still more surprising it appeared, that he seemed by no means displeased at finding that Anne still continued to display her attachment to her late mistress, by the fondest and most unwearied attention to the children whom she had left behind.

Elinor and William Tyrrell, for so they were called, (the first names having been given to them by Anne, and the second appropriated to them by apparently common consent,) were two lovely children; nor did Mr. Levison gaze on them with the less interest, when, as was often the case, he casually beheld them at the house of William Powell, because Anne would minutely point out the resemblance which each of them bore to their unfortunate mother.

"William," she would say, "has exactly her fine black eyes and hair, and clear complexion; and Elinor, though she is different in most respects, has her very mouth and teeth, and that lovely smile, which used to make my heart glad when I beheld it. Poor thing, she seldom smiled after——but I won't talk of old times! Heaven grant that they may be happier than their poor mother! but, somehow, I often sit and think what a dismal thing it will be, when they grow up, to hear that——"

"They shall never hear it, if I can prevent it," interrupted Mr. Levison. "Do not ask me what I mean to do, Anne, for perhaps it will only grieve you; though, as you will soon have a family of your own, the loss of these infants will not be much felt; and you may be sure I will always do that which will promote their benefit."

Time, however, passed on, until the children had reached their third year, before Mr. Levison made any further declaration of his intentions, and Anne never dared to interrogate him on the subject: for although he had a heart replete with humanity and kindness towards his fellow creatures, Mr. Levison was always positive, and sometimes harsh and repulsive in his manners.

Anne, however, possessed great influence over him,

because he valued her as she deserved to be valued: but he never forgot the difference of their stations in life, and Anne's natural good sense prevented her from ever trespassing upon the bounds of his pride.

From the time of his first settling in his patrimonial estate, under such peculiarly melancholy circumstances, Mr. Charles Levison had nearly altogether secluded himself from the world—but he could not bring himself to feel entirely independent of that world's opinion; and by various circumstances he was informed that his patronising, and even seeming to regard with affection, the poor children, whose birth had entailed on them only infamy and disgrace, gave rise to many unpleasant and bitter animadversions among those whom his pride and reserve had displeased. Once, too, he was reminded that those very children were, by law, considered the children of his brother; and, as such, might hereafter be induced to prefer claims, which it might be difficult to adjust to his satisfaction; and, in short, the whole affair, so far from dying away in the remembrance of those with whom he was partially connected, was so constantly brought forward, and gave rise to so many unpleasant reflections, that Mr. Levison at length felt his abode in the country very irksome, and accordingly made known his intention of resuming his continental tour, which his brother's death had interrupted.

"And the children?" said Anne, in an apprehensive tone.

"The children I shall remove to another part of the country, where their unhappy history is unknown," he replied; "and of this be assured, I will not only take care of them while I live—but, after my death, they will be amply provided for."

Drawn & Engd by W. Chevalier

"She had now a little girl of her own
whom she had also called Elinor"

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Anne dared not remonstrate against this decision; and as she had now a little girl of her own, whom she had also called Elinor, and in whose round chubby face she would fancy there was as strong a resemblance to her lamented mistress, as existed in either of the orphans, she was, perhaps, the more easily reconciled to parting with her really living portraits.

CHAPTER IV.

> The storm that wrecks the wintry sky,
> No more disturbs their sweet repose
> Than summer evening's latest sigh
> That shuts the rose.——MONTGOMERY.

MR. LEVISON'S intended departure from Cumberland was now publicly spoken of, and conjecture was busy as to what he intended to do with the children. Few credited his real goodness of heart—still fewer believed him a man likely to act with romantic generosity—and it was confidently predicted that his extraordinary attention to them would soon cease, when they were far removed from him.

But, before these busy conjectures were set at rest, an event took place, which superseded for a time all other topics of conversation, and made the poor children still greater objects of interest and attention than ever.

The two little ones had strayed together, as was often the case, to some distance from the cottage-door in which they had been reared. Their nurse, occupied in preparing breakfast for them and her husband, had not,

it appeared, for some time missed them; but when at length she sought them in their usual haunts, they were not to be found.

For hours she continued her terrified inquiries in all directions, and at length, in utter despair, she flew to the Hall, to communicate her doleful tidings.

Scarcely could Mr. Levison have discovered greater agitation had they been his own children, than he did on this occasion. His servants were sent out in every direction: William Powell's farm was deserted by all but Anne, whose child was ill, and who was therefore constrained, though much against her inclination, to remain at home; but, in spite of all their exertions, the night passed away, without any certain tidings of the children, and Mr. Levison was in despair.

It was discovered, however, that a gang of gipsies had been for some days encamped at a few miles distance, and they immediately became objects of suspicion.

With difficulty, William Powell succeeded in tracing the direction they had taken, on breaking up their encampment that morning; and at length he overtook them. But the children were not with them, nor were any of their members absent, except one woman, whom they had left, they said, lying dangerously ill in a cottage on their road.

Wearied and dispirited, Powell returned some hours after day-break, to communicate the failure of his inquiries. He at first intended to go straight to the Hall, but his own house was only a few yards out of the direct road, and he could not resist the temptation of calling there first.

The voice of Anne, uttering varied exclamations of

surprise, joy, and regret, struck his ear as he alighted; and he entered to behold Anne wondering, weeping, and rejoicing by turns over the two children, who seemed scarcely to know whether they should laugh or cry with her.

The only information respecting them which Powell could procure from his wife was, that she had been roused from a half slumber, which had overtaken her after sitting all night with her own child in her lap, by a voice, which seemed familiar to her ear, calling "Anne!" but that, on going to the door, she could discover nobody but the two children, who seemed heartily rejoiced to see her, but refused to come in without some person whom they kept looking about for, but did not know how to name.

"She told us she would come back with more strawberries," said William, "and I know she will—for she is not a story-teller."

After waiting some time, however, at the door, they became convinced that their friend had really deserted them, and at last reluctantly consented to come into the house.

By questioning them, Anne had learned that it was "a pretty good woman," who said her name was Elinor, as well as the little girl's, and who had given them nice cakes, and bread and milk, and had talked about their "Aunty Anne," a title which Anne had fondly taught them to give her.

This information excited a deep interest in the breast of the affectionate Anne, and bitterly did she regret that the unfortunate mother, for she did not for a moment doubt that it was her that the children had

seen, had not had sufficient confidence in her fidelity, and come openly to the house.

"I should have been satisfied and happy, if I could only have once more seen her, and have known that she was doing well," she observed; "and I should have been so glad to have told her that Mr. Levison, whom she so much feared, pitied her, and was convinced of her innocence; and I know, too, that he would have been rejoiced to have told her so himself, and would have assisted her—and, poor thing, who can tell but she stands in need of assistance. The little she carried from here, must have been long ago spent."

Powell, however, was not of the same opinion as his wife. He thought that her taking the journey to see her children, as she must, in all probability, have come a considerable distance, was a convincing proof that she was tolerably comfortable in her circumstances.

"And who knows, Anne," he continued, "perhaps she is married again, and may have her reasons for keeping altogether out of the way of any body that has known her before."

Anne, however, would not believe that Mrs. Levison would ever marry again, and still less under any circumstances of deception; but it was of little use, they observed, to make themselves uneasy by speculating upon a subject on which they could not hope to gain any information, and Powell, having learned all he could from the children, set off without delay to the Hall, to communicate to Mr. Levison what had occurred.

Mr. Levison was at once surprised and grieved. From the time that he had read the unvarnished tale which had made him acquainted with the sorrows and sufferings of

Elinor, he had anxiously longed to behold her; and he heard, with feelings of the utmost vexation and impatience, how near he had been to the attainment of this wish, without accomplishing it. Every endeavour, however, to obtain intelligence of the person who had thus given rise to so much alarm and conjecture, was in vain; and Mr. Levison was at length obliged most reluctantly to relinquish all hope of ever seeing the unfortunate female who had excited such deep interest in his bosom.

About three months after this incident, he quitted his paternal mansion, the children having been previously sent off, under the care of their nurse, to be placed (as he alleged) under the superintendance of a respectable woman, in a sea-port town in a distant county, in order that they might be brought up with, and receive the same education, as her own family. None of Mr. Levison's old servants accompanied him, but remained at the Hall, it being his avowed intention to return thither at no very distant period, and pass the remainder of his life there.

Before, however, he quitted England, an event occurred, which made a considerable alteration in his intentions, and induced him to delay his departure for some months. He received intelligence that his younger brother, who had for some years been a resident in India, had died on his passage to England, whither he was returning to establish his health, accompanied by his only child, but a few years old, and who was now the presumptive heir to the name and estates of the Levison family. The mother of this child had died in child-birth, and Mr. Charles Levison, whose name he bore, was now left his sole guardian and protector.

Mr. Levison was at first undecided whether he would

not at once give up his intention of making a foreign tour; but he had some strong reasons for wishing to revisit Switzerland, and, as the health of his nephew was very delicate, and the physicians had declared that it would probably be improved by travelling, he at length resolved on pursuing his original plan; and, accordingly, a few weeks after the arrival of the child in England, he again quitted it with his uncle.

Contrary to the expectations of the few who were interested in his welfare, Mr. Levison remained abroad several years. The remembrance of the strange occurrences at Levison Hall, which had given rise to so much talk and conjecture at the time, gradually died away, and the name of Tyrrell was almost forgotten, except by the old domestics at the Hall, and William Powell and his wife, with whom it sometimes formed a subject of conversation by their fire-side.

Anne was now the mother of a fine family, yet she never forgot the two deserted infants of her unfortunate mistress; and often felt uneasy at not having ever heard of them, from the time that Mr. Levison quitted England, at which period he wrote to assure her that he had seen her two little favourites, William and Elinor, and that they were well and happy in their new establishment.

It was about seven years after this, and a few months only before Mr. Levison's return to his estate, that William Powell had occasion to go into Dorsetshire, to receive a legacy from a distant relation, and Anne learned with pleasure that he would have to pass within a few miles of the place where the children had been placed by Mr. Levison.

"I would go to see them, if it were twenty miles out of my way," observed William; "if it were only to make your mind easy."

Having, therefore, got as clear a direction as he could from the nurse, who had been sent back, after remaining there a few weeks, till the children became habituated to their new residence, William commenced his journey, promising to write to his wife, the moment he reached his journey's end, and had seen the objects of her care and anxiety.

Anne, however, was doomed to disappointment; for William wrote only to say, that, after the strictest search, he could discover no traces of the person to whose charge the children had been committed. There were a few persons in the neighbourhood, who recollected a woman of that name (Davenport), and her family, having been resident there for a short time; but they knew nothing of her connexions, or to what place she went when she left there; and, most unwillingly, Powell was obliged to return, without gaining any further information.

"They are the children of mystery altogether," observed the steward, to whom Anne communicated her disappointment; "but should Mr. Levison return, as I have reason to think he will, shortly, your mind will be set at rest."

Mr. Levison did return, as we have said before, in a few months; and Anne, full of anxiety and anticipation, accompanied her husband to the Hall, in order, with the rest of the tenants, to receive and welcome their master.

Orders had been received at the Hall, to prepare for

the reception of Mr. Levison's nephew, his tutor, and three visitors, besides several additional servants.

Anne's surprise, however, was excessive when the carriage which contained the visitors drew up, and she beheld that two out of the three were children—the one a boy, and the other a girl—and precisely of the same age as those whom she was so anxious about.

"It must be them," she whispered to her husband, "who else can they be?"

William was of the same opinion—but they were doomed to disappointment. Mr. Levison, as soon as he recognised Anne and her husband, greeted them with great kindness; but he did not, or would not understand the anxious looks which Anne threw, from time to time, towards the young visitors, who stood, with an elderly lady, at some distance.

It was not till they were seated with the other tenants, at the festive board which was provided for the occasion, that Anne learned who the objects of her solicitude were.

"The young lady," said the butler, "is my master's daughter—the boy, an orphan of fortune, bequeathed to his care by his parents."

"His daughter!" repeated Anne: "has Mr. Levison, then, been married?"

"That does not always follow, Mrs. Powell," returned old Thomas, smiling, "nor have we any business to trouble ourselves about it. All I can tell you is, that the pretty creature is called Miss Fanny Levison, and that she calls my master, papa."

"And what is the boy's name?" said Anne, in a tone of vexation and disappointment.

"His name—his name—I cannot remember it—it is a strange, outlandish sort of a name;—but here comes Mr. Osborne, and he will recollect it."

From Mr. Osborne, the steward, Anne learned that the young stranger was called Denzil Montgomery, and though cruelly disappointed with the information she had received, she was obliged to defer satisfying her impatience to know what was become of Elinor's children, until Mr. Levison should introduce the subject himself.

It was some time before this opportunity occurred, and then Anne learned, with more surprise than sorrow, that the children were both dead!

Mr. Levison said that he could give her very little information on the subject; but they had died nearly together, soon after he left England.

"I certainly ought not to fret," said Anne, wiping away her tears, "for I know they are better off than they could be in this world—but yet, they were two such lovely creatures, and they would now have been, I dare say, as tall and——

"Yes, they were about the same age as Denzil and Fanny," said Mr. Levison, hastily interrupting her.

"And that young lady, then, is your daughter, sir?" said Anne, looking at Fanny, who, with her two brothers, as she called Charles Levison and Denzil, was walking on the terrace before the windows, at which Anne was standing with Mr. Levison.

"Yes, she is my daughter," replied Mr. Levison, a slight flush crossing his cheek, "and that is my nephew," he continued, pointing to Charles; "you would scarcely think he is two years older than his companions, who

are both of the same age, or at least there is only a few weeks difference between them."

Anne remained silent. There were suspicions in her mind, which she scarcely knew how to define to herself; and as she earnestly gazed first at one and then at the other, she endeavoured to trace some resemblance to the two children whose images were so indelibly impressed on her mind.

Elinor's hair was a great deal lighter, certainly, and her face and form different from those of the pretty delicate girl, to whom she had been so much attached; "and I could never have thought that William, though he was a fine black-eyed boy, would ever have been half so handsome as that noble, elegant youth," she murmured to herself; "and yet it is strange—exactly the same age, and we never heard a word about Mr. Levison's having a daughter!"

The more she reflected, the more convinced Anne became, in her own mind, that Mr. Levison was deceiving her, and that these were the identical children whose loss she regretted; but though she persuaded herself that she had made this discovery, she could bring no one else to give any credit to the idea. The steward, Mr. Osborne, laughed at her, when she at length, by her hints, made him comprehend what she believed; and her husband very seriously reproved her for indulging such idle romantic fancies, which he predicted would infallibly bring her into disgrace with Mr. Levison, should it reach his ears.

Anne, however, with the usual pertinacity of her sex, still clung to the idea she had formed; and though she had prudence enough to confine her secret to her own

bosom, she never relinquished the conviction that Fanny Levison and Denzil Montgomery were brother and sister.

Whether she would have continued this prudent reserve, after the parties grew up to "man's estate," and when it became pretty evident to all but Mr. Levison, who never seemed to dream of the possibility of such an event, that they regarded each other with very different feelings to those of fraternal affection—must remain a matter of doubt; for, before that period, poor Anne, to the inestimable grief and loss of her family, was conveyed to the grave, and with her was buried all probability of such a suspicion being infused into the minds of those who were the objects of it.

The elderly lady, whom we mentioned as having accompanied Mr. Levison on his return to Levison Hall, was a maiden sister, who had long been estranged from him, on account of the gaieties in which he had, up to the period of his brother's death, indulged.

The manner in which the latter, Mr. Alfred Levison, had lived at the Hall, had been as little consonant to her inclinations and habits, and she had therefore chiefly resided in a distant part of the country; but upon her brother Charles returning to settle for life with the three children, and her being convinced that he had in reality renounced his former follies, and become a complete domestic man, she consented to take up her residence with him, and preside as mistress of the Hall.

Mrs. Powell was a great favourite with Miss Rachel, for so the old lady was called, though she had long passed the period when it would have been decorous to have assumed a more matronly title; and during Anne's

last illness, long and frequent conversations had been held between them, of which the unhappy Elinor and her children had been the theme; but Mrs. Powell soon discovered, that, if there was any deception practised, the old lady was not a partaker of it, and she never, therefore, ventured to hint her suspicions.

In perfect unconsciousness of any mystery existing respecting them, Fanny Levison and Denzil Montgomery grew together, until they had attained the age of eighteen; at which period, under the care of their protectors, they, for the first time, visited London; and where, a very short time after their arrival, Denzil met with the adventure which we have recorded in our first chapter, and which effectually destroyed the visions of happiness in which he had for some time been accustomed to indulge.

CHAPTER V.

> Tis sweet to watch Affection's eye,
> To mark the tear with love replete,
> To feel the softly-breathing sigh,
> When Friendship's lips the tones repeat.
>
> MITFORD.

DENZIL, on leaving Fanny, retired to his own room; but it was in vain that he sought, by recalling every circumstance connected with the adventure of the preceding evening, to convince himself of what he devoutly wished, and Charles had roundly asserted, namely, that the whole was an attempt to impose upon his credulity, and take advantage of his ignorance of the world.

The more, indeed, he reflected, the more he became convinced that the man and woman he had seen, were persons who, by some means, were in possession of secrets respecting himself, which he would have given worlds to have had elucidated.

He had hitherto been perfectly satisfied with the account Mr. Levison had given him of his birth and prospects in life. He had stated, that he (Denzil) was the son of an officer in the army, who had died abroad, and that his mother had not long survived him. Mr. Levison believed, he said, that it had been what the world called an imprudent marriage, for Mrs. Montgomery appeared to have neither friend nor connexion, when he had met with her, residing in a boarding-house at Lausanne, in Switzerland, where she had died, leaving her child to his care and guardianship.

"Then I am entirely indebted to your benevolence, sir, for my support," replied Denzil, colouring with agitation, when this detail was given him, which was when he was about the age of sixteen, and when he first began to think that it would be quite impossible for him to be happy, if Fanny Levison did not share that happiness.

"You are very hasty, Mr. Denzil Montgomery," replied Mr. Levison, in his usual dry and deliberate way, when he felt offended; "very hasty, indeed, sir—but if you would just allow me to go on without interruption, I would tell you, that, though left friendless, you were not left destitute of that which will always secure you the friendship of the world. I need not now mention the sum which will be yours, when you become capable, by law, of taking your affairs into your own hands; but

I will tell you, that it will secure you from any fear of wanting bread and cheese."

Denzil knew enough of Mr. Levison's odd method of expressing himself, to be quite satisfied with this explanation, as to his future prospects; and as to the rest of the affair, no doubt of its correctness intruded upon his mind. He therefore felt no surprise that Mr. Levison never spoke of his father or mother, since the one, it appeared, was entirely unknown to him, and his acquaintance with the other, was limited to a knowledge of her misfortunes and premature death.

Denzil, though hasty and impetuous, was reflective and considerate. He saw immediately how great were his obligations to Mr. Levison, who ever treated and considered him exactly in the same light as his own nephew and heir; and he would never, therefore, suffer himself to be betrayed even into a laugh at the weaknesses and eccentricities of his benefactor.

The solemn warning he had received, however, now gave rise to a train of reflections on the circumstances which Mr. Levison had communicated, which served only still farther to confirm the impression it had made.

"It is improbable," he thought, "that were I the child of parents of respectable birth, and possessed, too, of a competent fortune, there should not be some one to whom my existence and welfare would be of some importance; and is it likely that my mother should choose rather to confide her child to the care of an entire stranger, and one too of whom she had seen so little, since she must have been an invalid during the whole of the short period that he was residing in the same house with her? Yet, if I am the same age as Fanny—and how

often he has repeated that—Oh, God! what would I not give, to be assured that he has spoken truth in *all* that he has told me—and yet her mother, too, died at Lausanne! Well do I remember the agitation—the deep emotion he betrayed when his favourite, Mrs. Powell, was buried, and we were about to join her children in the funeral procession—'Papa,' said Fanny, with the tears standing in her beautiful eyes, 'where was *my* mother buried?—you have never told me, and it would be some comfort to see even her grave.' Well do I recollect the faltering voice and varying colour with which he replied, 'That is a comfort, my child, which I as well as you are denied—your mother's grave is many, many miles from this place—the sea rolls between it and us. I have told you before, Fanny, that you were born at Lausanne, and it is there——' He could not finish the sentence, and I interfered to draw his attention from it. Yet he spoke to me of *my* mother's death, without appearing to feel any emotion. It cannot be that I am his son, for what motive could he have for concealing it, since he has acknowledged——but no, I will not, I cannot believe it!"

Though determined not to believe it, Denzil could not shake off the impression that had been made upon his mind, and when the dinner-bell rang, he felt himself so unequal to the task of meeting the object of his affection, that he pleaded a severe head-ache, as an excuse for remaining in his own room.

"Aye, aye, this is the effect of his last night's frolic!" observed Mr. Levison; "but it is no matter what he suffers—it will teach him, I hope, to be a little more cautious. Does he know that Fanny is ill

through your folly," he continued, addressing himself to Charles.

"I do not know, sir—I have not seen him, for I have been asleep, till within this half hour."

"A very pretty avowal for a young man to make—then you may add to your catalogue another day lost," observed Mr. Levison, who was now completely out of humour, at the absence of those in whose society he took so much delight. The dinner was found fault with, the servants were scolded, and poor aunt Rachel sat in complete fidgets, until the cloth was removed, and she was at liberty to retire.

"And pray, young man," said Mr. Levison, when he was left alone with his nephew, "pray, may I be allowed to ask you, what was the violent temptation that induced you and your companion to risk your safety in the streets of London, at such an hour—to say nothing of risking my displeasure?"

"Indeed, uncle, it was no temptation," returned Charles; "but Denzil had made an appointment that I considered it dangerous for him to attend alone, and therefore I went with him."

"An appointment!" repeated Mr. Levison; "an appointment! and with whom can Denzil have already formed a connexion, that he dare——"

"I have given my word of honour, sir, that I will not mention what or who it was that took us out, and I am sure you would not like me to forfeit it," said Charles.

"Certainly not—certainly not," replied his uncle, hastily, "but I shall take upon myself to let Mr. Denzil Montgomery know that he is in the high road to

ruin, and that I will not suffer him to disgrace either himself or me, by——I know too well, Charles, the misery which young men often entail, not only on themselves, but others, and——"

"You mistake, indeed, uncle," interrupted Charles; "you think it was a female, but I assure you, you are wrong; for Denzil is not likely to form any connexion of the kind you mean. It was only some scheme to get a little more money out of him than could be done by the common method of asking charity; but it failed, I suppose, in consequence of my being present, and I dare say the attempt will not be renewed."

Mr. Levison seemed astonished, and remained for some minutes lost in thought. "It was not a female, you say?" he at length observed. "I do not wish to tempt you, Charles, to forfeit your word—but this may be of more importance to Denzil than you can form any idea of. It failed, you say, because you were present—I shall not say a word more on the subject to Denzil; but, I beg, if you value his happiness, that you will keep a strict watch, and if any further attempt is made, avoid pledging yourself to secrecy, and let me know what is passing. I have a suspicion—a strong suspicion—and yet I do not know how it is possible——"

Again he was silent, and seemed lost in thought.

"This is one of my uncle's mysteries, in which he so much delights,"—thought Charles; "however, I will certainly do as he tells me—for Denzil is such a hot-brained, romantic fellow, that he is likely enough to get into some scrape, if he is left to himself."

"And you did not, then, see any female?" said Mr Levison, after a long pause.

"No—I do not remember to have noticed any—except, indeed," suddenly recollecting himself, "a gipsy woman, who wanted, I believe, to tell our fortunes, and to whom Denzil, I think, was foolish enough to give some silver."

Mr. Levison struck his hand with such violence on the table, that Charles started.

"It is the very person!" he exclaimed. "I would wager my life, it is she—but how could she——she can only suspect, at most, and I will take care she shall not——I would give a hundred pounds, Charles, to see that woman!"

"Indeed, uncle, you are in error," said Charles, surprised at the incoherence of his manner, and the agitation he betrayed. "This was quite a common beggar-woman, with flowers, I think, in her hand to sell—and had no connexion with the person Denzil went to meet."

"You know nothing about it, boy! you know nothing about it! It is all a plan, a scheme, and should it succeed, Denzil is ruined. I wish I had never come to London! It has always been fatal to me—but do not breathe a word of all this to Fanny, nor Denzil, and I charge you not to let him suspect that I know any thing more than what you told me in his presence."

Charles readily promised this, and indeed he had his own motives for concealing what had passed between him and his uncle; for he knew Denzil would be angry with him for having said so much, and he firmly believed that his uncle's important suspicions and warnings would turn out to be founded in mere nonsense, and therefore were not worth troubling his head about.

The family did not all meet together, till the following

morning, at breakfast. Fanny looked pale, but professed to be perfectly recovered, and seemed in more than her usual spirits, while Denzil tried to appear as if nothing extraordinary had occurred to disturb him.

It was very evident, however, to Mr. Levison, who kept a scrutinising eye upon him, that his ward was more than usually thoughtful and uneasy; and he saw, too, that Fanny was cooler than usual in her manner towards him.

"We are all very dull, this morning, I think," he observed; "suppose we order the carriage—I think I am well enough to bear a drive round the Parks, and the lads can have their horses; or, perhaps, Fanny would rather ride with them, than go in the coach with us old folks."

"Oh, no, papa—I would rather be with you and my aunt," said Fanny, eagerly.

Denzil coloured, but offered no opposition, and the carriage and the horses were ordered.

"What has happened between you and Denzil, my dear?" said Mr. Levison, as soon as his daughter and himself (Miss Rachel having declined accompanying them) were seated in the carriage.

"Nothing, indeed, dear papa—nothing, I assure you," replied Fanny, blushing.

"He has not made you the confidant of his midnight adventure, has he?" demanded her father, looking earnestly in her face.

"No, indeed," returned Fanny, with surprise, "nor should I seek to know it—for it has evidently had no good effect upon him."

"I do not think it has, indeed," said Mr. Levison,

drily, "but I would not have you notice it, my dear—it will only make matters worse."

During the whole time they were out, Denzil was melancholy and absent, and Mr. Levison observed that he was constantly glancing around, as if in expectation of seeing some one.

It seemed, however, as if no one appeared whom he expected to see, and they commenced their return home to dinner.

On turning the corner of St. James's Street, Denzil lingered for a moment behind his companions, and as he glanced casually around, he observed a man walking slowly along the pavement, whose figure he thought strongly resembled that of the man whom he was so anxious to see again.

Determined to be convinced, he reined in his horse, and approached close to the pavement. At that moment Mr. Levison, who had missed him from the side of the carriage, put his head out to look for him, and the man suddenly raised his eyes, which were before fixed on the earth. The moment he beheld Mr. Levison, he turned suddenly round, and darted away in a contrary direction from that in which he was before going.

Denzil saw this, and observed, too, the look with which Mr. Levison regarded him, and without a moment's hesitation he threw himself from his horse and was about to follow him, when he was arrested by Mr. Levison's desiring him to stop.

Habituated to attend instantly to his commands, Denzil turned to speak to Mr. Levison, and the man was gone.

"Where in the world were you hurrying to, Denzil?" inquired Mr. Levison.

Denzil looked confused—"I thought I knew that man," he replied.

"And what could you know of him, for goodness' sake," said Mr. Levison, "that could make you so anxious to renew your acquaintance with him? Now I will tell you candidly, Denzil, I *do* know that man—know him for one of the most dangerous scoundrels in existence. Believe me, if you have any thing to say to him, he will give you cause bitterly to repent it—for a more vile, artful, or unprincipled impostor, never existed! He once robbed me of a considerable sum of money, under a false pretence—and he has now, I suppose, been trying to practise on your credulity. I do not ask you, Denzil, how you became acquainted with him—I do not want to hear any thing about him—but I wish to impress on your mind the necessity of shunning him. Recollect, if he brings you into trouble after this solemn warning, it will be yourself whom you will have to blame—and recollect, too, that you will lose my friendship for ever, should I discover that you hold any correspondence with him!"

Denzil was surprised, and almost shocked at the vehemence with which Mr. Levison uttered this. Accustomed to consider him as a good and benevolent man, but one of very common every-day feeling and sentiments, he could not have believed that any subject could have excited in his mind such intense feelings as he now manifested. His features appeared almost convulsed with emotion, and the cold dew stood on his forehead in large drops, as with a look of earnest expectation he awaited Denzil's answer.

"I will not, sir—I will never again listen to him, should he seek me," he replied. "I own he has already

rendered me very unhappy, by what he has contrived to insinuate, rather than——"

"I have no doubt of it," interrupted Mr. Levison, hastily; "but, believe me, Denzil, he is as false as Heaven is true—and he seeks not your good, but your destruction. Promise me then, my dear boy, that you will never again hold any communication with him."

"I will solemnly promise, if you will answer me one question, sir," said Denzil; "not now, but at some future opportunity," he continued, glancing at Fanny, who, in the greatest surprise and agitation, had been a silent witness of their conversation.

"I will not submit to be questioned by you, sir," replied Mr. Levison; "either I am your friend, Mr. Denzil Montgomery, or I am not—but I will have no conditions made with me!"

Denzil felt dreadfully disappointed. He thought that he was on the very verge of satisfying all his doubts, and he now saw himself farther than ever from the explanation he so ardently desired.

The longer he reflected on the conversation that had passed between him and Mr. Levison, the more he was convinced that some strong motive must exist, to induce the latter thus vehemently to interdict all correspondence with the stranger: and if that motive were only his knowledge of his character, why not at once explain who he was, and where he had met with him.

Such were the thoughts that passed through Denzil's mind, as he retired to his apartment, to prepare for dinner. Before he was ready, Charles entered——

"What in the world is the matter now, Denzil?" he exclaimed. "I have heard my uncle seriously consulting

with aunt Rachel, whether it would not be possible for us to go off back again into the country at once, instead of remaining here three months; and giving, as his reason for such a hasty proceeding, that you will be ruined if you stay here."

"I stand quite as great a chance of being ruined, if I go into the country," returned Denzil, hastily. "Nay, I will not go there, unless something is done to quiet these horrible suspicions."

Charles stared at him in surprise—"Well, I really think London has turned all our brains," he observed. "You were all quite right and comfortable, when I stopped at Ebers's library, and when I get home, I find my uncle talking of running out of London, as if he had been bitten by a mad dog; and when I go to speak to Fanny, she flies away from me, with a look like a startled deer."

Denzil turned away, to conceal the emotion which the name of Fanny had aroused in his bosom, but Charles saw it not. Seldom troubled himself with those pangs which are occasioned by excessive sensibility, he was not very quick-sighted in discovering them in others, and, though really good-natured, frequently gave intense pain by his *mal-à-propos* remarks and observations.

The desire to tranquillise Fanny's mind, induced Denzil to endeavour to appear at his ease, when he met her at the dinner-table; at which he found, besides their own family, a Mr. and Mrs. Irwin, who, he soon understood, were old friends of Mr. Levison and his sister.

The lady cast a scrutinising glance at Denzil, who was the last that entered the room; and, upon his being introduced to her by Mr. Levison, the old lady, not satis

fied with her first investigation, deliberately drew out her spectacles, and renewed it a second time.

"Well, really," she observed, turning to Mr. Levison, "if you had not previously introduced your nephew to me, I should have taken *this* young man to have been him. He has just the complexion and hair of the Levisons, while your nephew's are quite light—the first of the family whom I remember to have seen with light hair and eyes."

"Charles resembles his mother more than our family," said Mr. Levison; "but there is another light-haired one," he added, looking at Fanny, "and yet I am flattered, sometimes, that she is like me."

Mrs. Irwin continued to gaze at Fanny's blushing face—

"Why, yes," she observed, "there is a likeness, certainly—what we call a family likeness—but I should much rather have judged this young gentleman to have been a near relation of yours, than either of the others—Is he of the Montgomeries of——"

"I really cannot answer any questions as to Denzil's pedigree," interrupted Mr. Levison; "all I can vouch for is, that his father was a Major in the army, and of course a gentleman; and his mother was a very accomplished woman."

Denzil's heart throbbed violently during these observations, which, though uttered in a low tone, were perfectly audible to his ear.

He was unwilling to believe Mr. Levison would deliberately utter an absolute falsehood; and yet the manner in which this explanation of his birth was given—the desire his guardian evidently manifested to change the

subject—and Mrs. Irwin's observations upon the fancied resemblance between himself and the Levison family—all conspired to increase his doubts and his misery; and when the conversation took a different turn, he found it impossible to force his attention so as to join in it.

Mr. Irwin, who, unlike his lady, was inclined to be taciturn, yet appeared anxious to converse with Denzil, and twice addressed observations to him, without being able to obtain an answer.

"Denzil has left his wits in the country, I believe," observed Mr. Levison.

"It is to be hoped he will find them safe, when he gets back there," returned Mr. Irwin, drily.

"I suppose they are in the possession of some canny Cumberland lass," observed the old lady, smiling.

"Oh, no, no," replied Mr. Levison, hastily. "It will be time enough, some years hence, for him to think of such matters."

"How old is Mr. Montgomery?" demanded Mrs. Irwin, looking attentively at him.

The question aroused Denzil from the absence of mind which had rendered him totally inattentive to the preceding conversation; and he looked anxiously at Mr. Levison for an answer.

"There is only a few weeks' difference between Fanny and him," said the latter; "and I believe she has just told you that she is nearly eighteen."

Denzil seemed to breathe more freely at hearing this, which was given in a manner so free from all restraint, so perfectly natural, that he could scarcely doubt its truth; his satisfaction, however, was immediately damped by Mrs. Irwin's reply.

"Only a few weeks! surely, you *must* be mistaken! It cannot be possible!" she observed. "Why, I am sure, he looks three or four years older."

"Impossible as it appears, it is nevertheless true," replied Mr. Levison, in a tone which shewed that he felt rather displeased at the freedom of the old lady's remarks.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Levison," she said, "but I was really surprised; and, as I did not know how long the young gentleman had been under your care, I thought it possible that you might be mistaken."

"I am not mistaken, I assure you," he observed; "he will be of age just seven weeks before Fanny Levison will have attained the same important period."

"Ah, how well do I remember when your poor brother Alfred came of age," returned the garrulous old lady. "I was then quite a girl—but I remember, as if it were but yesterday, the feastings and rejoicings which kept the whole country alive for two or three weeks. What a fine, handsome young man he was! I beg pardon—it is bringing melancholy recollections back to your mind; but, pray, is it true that that wretched woman is dead, and that she confessed before her death——"

"I know nothing at all of the circumstances you speak of," interrupted Mr. Levison, hastily. "I know not whether she is dead, or living; and as to confessing, I do not believe she could confess any thing that was not known to me!"

"Good heavens, then, she did acknowledge——"

"Pardon me," said Mr. Levison, again interrupting her; "it is a subject which, even at this distance of time, I cannot bear to discuss; but I will do this justice to her

memory, if she be dead, (though of that I am doubtful), that I do, from the bottom of my heart, believe her innocent of the foul crime of which she was accused; and that she was, on the whole, 'more sinned against, than sinning,' and, therefore, more to be pitied than condemned."

"Well, I am surprised to hear you say so," returned Mrs. Irwin, who seemed pertinaciously bent on continuing the subject; "but, if that was the case, Mr. Levison, why did she not——"

"It is useless for us now to enter into a discussion, which can only poison the comfort of our meeting," observed Mr. Levison; "besides," he added, looking significantly towards the young people, "I have another reason for not entering on the subject at present."

Mrs. Irwin was at length silenced, though it was evident she was disappointed, in not being allowed to pursue the subject.

The young men having remained a short time after the ladies had left the table, withdrew together into the library.

"Have you ever heard the circumstances to which Mrs. Irwin alluded, at dinner-time?" inquired Denzil, who had felt greatly interested in the subject, and the more especially because he had seen Miss Rachel's usually placid countenance betray the deepest emotion, though she had taken no part in the conversation.

"Something, but not distinctly, I have heard of the history of my uncle Alfred," returned Charles. "He was, as I have understood, poisoned, either by or at the instigation of his wife, in consequence of an illicit attachment, as I suppose, to some one."

"But your uncle, by what he said to-day, considers her innocent—for, of course, it was her to whom Mrs. Irwin alluded," observed Denzil.

"It would appear so," said Charles, "but I know very little about it; and what was told me, was under the seal of secrecy, by old Mrs. Williams, the housekeeper at the Hall. You recollect how often we have felt surprised at my uncle's never using the large dining-room that opened on the terrace, and which we sometimes were in the habit of making the scene of our boyish sports?"

"Yes, and I remember, too, how angry both Mrs. Williams and the butler were, when they sometimes caught us getting in through the windows, to play there on a wet day, when we could not keep out of doors," replied Denzil.

"Yes, but you did not know that I was frightened out of going there, at last," said Charles, "by being told that it was the scene of a most foul and unnatural murder, with the addition, which I suppose arose solely from the old woman's own imagination, that sights had been seen, and sounds heard in that room, which were quite sufficient to account for its being disused. She was so much afraid of my betraying my knowledge of the story to my uncle, by whom, it seems, all the old servants had been cautioned never to reveal it, that I could only glean from her the outlines of the affair."

"It is singular, though, that you never told me any thing about it," replied Denzil.

"Not at all—I knew, too well, your turn for romance—you would have been immediately seeking for adventures, and my uncle would have found out that you were

acquainted with that which he has always particularly desired to keep secret from you."

"From me! why from me, particularly?" said Denzil, with surprise.

"I did not mean you, particularly—the prohibition to speak of the story was given generally—but Mrs. Williams was more especially afraid of your knowing it, because she was sure, she said, you would not rest content, without trying to have ocular demonstration of the fact that the room was haunted; and then, if you got a fright, she would be blamed for having put it into your head.

Denzil smiled. "A very sufficient reason, certainly," he observed; "but I suppose the same motives for silence did not exist towards Fanny—for I now recollect, that she would never join us in our trespasses in the dining-room."

"Do you think it possible that aunt Rachel could or would possess any secret which Fanny did not share?" said Charles. "I am sure, I should consider it a miracle, if I ever discovered that such a thing had existed."

"And yet," thought Denzil, "if there is any deception practised respecting my birth and origin, it is certain that Miss Rachel must be acquainted with it, and equally certain that Fanny is not."

"What are you thinking of, so intently?" said Charles, after sitting for nearly a quarter of an hour in silence by his side, during which Denzil had been assiduously recalling to his mind every circumstance he could think of, that tended to prove the correctness of Mr. Levison's statement as to his birth.

Denzil started at the question.

"I would lay my life," continued Charles, "that you

covert attack upon my good-nature. It is not the first time, you know, that you have condescended to coax me into an alliance with you in some of your schemes, of which you have had all the profit, and poor I all the discredit."

"No, indeed, Fanny, I have spoken the plain truth," replied Charles, "nor have I any scheme at present to execute, unless, indeed, you could propose any to frighten away that prosing old woman, Mrs. Irwin, and her nonentity husband, and persuade your father to let us all go to see the new pantomime at Drury Lane, as he proposed yesterday, before he thought of sending to invite them!"

"*C'est impossible, toute impossible!*" said Fanny, shaking her head. "Aunt Rachel and Mrs. Irwin have got so deep into a review of their younger days,—the history of the conquests they achieved,—the beautiful sacks, petticoats, and negligées they wore,—the compliments that were paid them, and the vast superiority of men and manners, particularly female manners, in their time, over those of the present age—with a variety of other particulars, too numerous to mention—that they will not, I am afraid, have finished before bed-time; and, indeed, I expect it will be an adjourned debate, to be resumed at our next meeting, for, except on the subject of pedigrees, in which I understand she is quite *au fait*, I do not really think the old lady possesses any subjects of conversation."

"Oh, she is clever at pedigrees, is she?" said Charles; "then I will help her to mount her hobby-horse, when I go to tea—for I will ask her whether Mrs. Irwin is descended from the famous Sir Hildebrand de Irwin,

who performed such wonderful feats in the Holy Wars?"

"Was there such a person?" said Fanny, innocently.

"Not that I know of, coz," he replied; "but I know, if she prides herself on her pedigree, she will be very anxious to establish her relationship, and it will be fun to hear her attempt it."

"Oh, then, pray do not do any such thing," said Fanny, seriously; "you know my father is inclined to set an inordinate value on 'good blood,' as he styles it; and he will never forgive you, if he finds out that you are jesting on such a subject."

"Well, then, I will not," replied Charles; "but I may at least be allowed to recommend myself to the old lady's favour, by avowing my admiration of the ladies and dresses of the last century."

"And do you expect to get credit for your taste?" said Fanny, smiling; "do you think aunt Rachel has forgotten the offence you gave her, by ridiculing her stiff-flowered damask and brocaded petticoat, and, above all, her *toupée*, in the picture which represents her in all her youthful charms? No, no, Charles—if you have no better scheme for the amusement of the evening, than turning Mrs. Irwin's foibles to account, I am afraid we are likely to have a dull time of it."

"Cannot you help me, Denzil?" demanded Charles. "Come, ascend the heaven of your invention, and see what your fancy can produce, to counteract the spells of dullness, which else will enthral us."

"I cannot fancy it possible to be dull, while Fanny is smiling," replied Denzil, trying to assume the cheerful tone of his companions.

"Oh, now I must run away from you," returned Fanny, laughing. "Another compliment, and from Denzil, too! The grave, sententious Denzil! it is enough, I am sure, to turn my giddy little brain."

"How long have I deserved the epithets you have bestowed on me, my dear Fanny?" said Denzil, with tenderness, as Charles arose, and quitted the library. "You were wont to reprove me for indulging in exuberant gaiety, and have not unfrequently been my Mentor, in advising me to restrain my inordinate propensity to mirth. How comes it that you have so completely altered your opinion of me, as to apply to me the terms *grave* and *sententious?*"

"How comes it that you are so completely altered as to deserve them?" replied Fanny, looking earnestly in his face. "How comes it, that, instead of looking as you were wont to do, the very spirit of gaiety and animation, you are become the personification of sorrow and despair—the very representative," she continued, assuming a livelier tone, though the tears trembled in her eyes, "the very representative of 'the knight of the rueful countenance,' and, like him, I suspect, mistaking the phantoms of your own imagination for realities."

"Heaven grant it may prove so!" exclaimed Denzil, with fervour. "Heaven, in its infinite mercy, grant it! I can abide your laughter—I can submit to your chidings—any thing—every thing—but to know that I no longer dare——".

"Dare what, Denzil? why do you thus suddenly pause, at the moment you have raised my curiosity to the highest pitch?" demanded Fanny.

"Because I dare not speak—I dare not raise, in your

pure and innocent mind, suspicions and doubts, which almost shake my own reason."

"I will not ask you another question, Denzil," said Fanny, "whatever this dreadful secret is that thus oppresses you, I can still hope—so long as I feel convinced that you regard me with the same feelings, the same affection—for I will not hesitate to pronounce that word, which you have hitherto done—I must confess I did think," (and she blushed violently,) "that your feelings towards me were changed, and that you had met some one whom you thought more worthy of your regard than——"

"Never, never, Fanny—never shall I feel for any the love, the adoration, the esteem—but that is a cold word, and yet, perhaps, it ought to be the only one I should use—the only one that I could properly apply—but I cannot—Oh no, I cannot banish from my mind feelings which have 'grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength.' Oh, Fanny, I am miserable—miserable beyond what your imagination can conceive!"

"And is it your affection, your regard for me, that renders you miserable, Denzil?" demanded Fanny, reproachfully. "If so, I am, indeed, unfortunate."

"No, no, do not say so, Fanny. It is I who am unfortunate—you may soon find some one worthy of your affection—some one in whose love you will forget the unhappy Denzil, but never, never shall I meet with one who can be what you have been—what you are to me!"

"I must not—I cannot talk with you any longer, Denzil—you are, indeed, incomprehensible! One question, however, I will ask you. Is it my father whom you fear will oppose our happiness? Have you any rea-

son to think that he knows of—of——that he would not consent——Denzil, you know what I would say."

She hid her lovely blushing face in her hands, in the deepest confusion, as she concluded.

"I do not know that Mr. Levison has the slightest suspicion of our attachment, Fanny," returned Denzil. "If I did—if I were convinced that he did know it, I should be at once relieved from all fear—for he could not, he dare not, be so cruel, so devoid of common feeling, as to suffer for a moment such a fatal delusion to exist."

"Denzil, what is it you allude to?" exclaimed Fanny. "I said I would not ask you another question—but you alarm, you terrify me! I am fearful that your mind is diseased, and that these horrid doubts and fears, which you speak of, are the mere fantasies of a heated brain!"

Denzil shook his head with a melancholy smile—"No, no, I am not mad, Fanny," he replied, "though it would be better far that I should be so, than that my fears should prove to be well-founded."

The return of Charles prevented Fanny's reply, and she hastily retreated by another door, to prevent her cousin's discovering her excessive agitation.

"I thought as much," said Charles, looking significantly at Denzil, "I thought, after I had left you with Fanny, that I had done wrong, and that you would get into your heroics again, and make that poor girl miserable."

"And do you suppose, then, that I intentionally make her or myself miserable?" returned Denzil, angrily.

"Oh, well I am glad to see that you are vexed," said Charles; "if I could once rouse you into a passion, I should have some hope of you. But come, aunt Ra-

chel has been waiting for us this half hour, to come to tea; so do, pray, clear your sombre brow, and try to look a little like other people."

Denzil felt that his face could be no true index of his mind, if it did look like others.

"For no person," he murmured to himself, as he followed his companion to the drawing-room, "no, not one individual in the world, can feel the misery that I feel."

Fanny was not in the room when they entered, and Miss Rachel testified considerable impatience at her tardiness.

"She has been with you, has she not?" she inquired, looking at Denzil, "and why could she not as well come with you, since it seems plain that she prefers your company to ours."

Denzil felt astonished at this attack; though Rachel was often peevish with her brother and her nephew, and considered it a part of good housewifery to scold the servants pretty often, yet Fanny and himself had hitherto been privileged persons, for they were both favorites, and she never seemed to think they could do wrong.

Unconsciously he glanced from her to Mrs. Irwin, and was immediately struck with the scowling look and consequential air, with which she regarded him.

"It is to her interference, then, that poor Fanny and I are indebted for this unusual severity, on the part of aunt Rachael," he thought; and the sentence that was involuntarily rising to his lips, with the intention of exculpating Fanny, by declaring that she had accidentally encountered them in the library, was suppressed; and, in lieu of it, he observed with pointed emphasis—

"Fanny, I am sure, my dear aunt," (so he was accus-

tomed to call her) "at all times prefers *your* company to that of any one else in the world; but she considered you were engaged with your friend, and thought her presence, perhaps, a restraint on your mutual communications."

"Miss Levison will not want a champion, it seems, while Mr. Montgomery is near," observed Mrs. Irwin, with a sneering smile.

"Certainly not, madam," returned Denzil, with spirit; "but I believe this has been the first time that she has needed one—and it is somewhat unfortunate that it should happen now, particularly."

Fanny entered, but Denzil's reply seemed to have quite disarmed her aunt's resentment, and she made no remark on her absence, except to say—

"We have waited tea for you love, for your father and Mr. Irwin decline taking tea with us."

"I am sorry, dear aunt," said Fanny, with her usual sweetness of manner, "but I was in the library with Denzil and Charles, and was not aware you had sent for me, until I went to my dressing-room."

"You are very fond of reading, I suppose, Miss Levison?" said Mrs. Irwin.

Fanny replied in the affirmative.

"Aye, when I was a girl, books were not thought so necessary as at present for females," replied the old lady. "We were taught what was requisite to make us good wives and good mothers, and had little time for study. I question if I ever passed two hours at a time in my father's library, in my life."

Fanny looked disconcerted at this unexpected attack upon her habits and propensities, and Charles muttered an execration between his teeth, at the old lady's offi-

ciousness, while Denzil felt too indignant to express his feelings, except by looks.

"I never, in my life, knew any good come of making women too learned," continued Mrs. Irwin, finding no one ventured to oppose her; "I am not casting any reflections on you, my dear," addressing Fanny, "but I do think it a great misfortune that you have been brought up in the manner you have—the constant companion of two young men, whose habits and taste must of course have influenced yours. My mother would not suffer my sisters and me to associate even with my brothers, except in her presence: for, she said, it destroyed that distinction which ought to be always kept up between the sexes, and rendered girls bold, presuming, and regardless of those restraints which ought to regulate every female's conduct."

"You have ocular demonstration then, madam, of the error of your mother's theory," said Denzil, fixing his piercing eyes upon her, with a look of defiance; "for nobody, not even you, will assert that Miss Levison is bold or presuming; and, even on points of domestic economy, I rather suspect she might challenge a comparison with any one—aye, even if they were so blissfully ignorant as not to be able to read even the title-page of a book—and yet she had the misfortune, as you observe, to have been not only educated with her cousin Charles, and myself, but to have far outstripped us in many points."

"I wish her friends, sir, may always have as much reason to exult in her acquirements as you seem to think they have," said Mrs. Irwin, drily.

"I am sure they will," said Denzil, warmly. During the latter part of this conversation, Fanny had been occupied with her aunt at the tea-table; but, though she did not

distinctly hear all that had passed, she learned enough, from Denzil's animated look, and Mrs. Irwin's offended and haughty manner, to know that he had been successfully pleading her cause against the prejudiced and narrow-minded "friend of her family," as Mrs. Irwin had more than once emphatically styled herself.

The tea-things were about to be removed, when Mr. Levison and his friend entered the room, but evidently under the influence of wine.

"Here's the two milksops," observed Irwin, clapping Denzil familiarly on the shoulder; "they're not like you and I were, Levison, at their age—we could take our *quantum suff.* like two jolly dogs then, and never stole away to the tea-table."

"That was the difference of education, sir," said Denzil, stealing a triumphant glance at Mrs. Irwin, "keeping up the proper distinction between the sexes."

"Aye, Denzil, you are right, my boy—our education differed materially from yours, but I don't think we were much the better for it, friend Irwin. I rather think we should have been spared, if a different mode had been adopted, many aches and pains, which now torment us—not to mention the heart-aches, which have sometimes arisen from such causes. No, no, my two boys are yet boys, and they have no disposition to prove themselves men, by such means as you and I thought necessary to shew our manhood."

"Oh, you are too moral and sentimental for me, Charles!" returned Mr. Irwin. "I do not know what sort of stuff your heart is made of—but mine, I assure you, was never so tender as to feel any very deep wound."

"Yet, if you were to reflect upon some little affairs.

Irwin——but I won't tell tales; I forgot Mrs. Irwin was present—though those are days gone by, and therefore of no consequence to her!"

"There, now, you have brought a pretty hornet's nest about my ears—I shall be stung to death, to-night, with her conjectures and reproaches," said Mr. Irwin, in a low voice.

"Pshaw, she can't be so ridiculous! she is too good a wife, I am sure, to wish to pry into the peccadilloes committed long before she ever even heard of you," replied Mr. Levison.

Denzil listened to this conversation with a species of mischievous exultation, for he perceived that Mrs. Irwin had sense and shrewdness enough to see how completely it was at variance with her own doctrines; and though she was evidently on the fidgets, to give both Mr. Irwin and his friend a lecture, she restrained her impatience, and only recommended them to take some tea to clear their heads.

"Well, what are we all looking so solemn about?" said Mr. Levison. "Are we not going to have a little music? Charles, where is your flute? and Fanny, come, there's a darling, let us have one of your very best new songs, and Denzil will accompany you."

"This is quite a musical age," said Mrs. Irwin, while Denzil was occupied in placing the music-books for Fanny, and Charles was screwing together his flute "In my younger days——"

She stopped abruptly, for she caught Denzil's satirical glance.

"Aye," rejoined Mr. Levison, "in your younger days, when playing 'God save the King,' 'the Battle

of Prague,' and singing, without time or tune, 'Water parted from the Sea,' and two or three more, was the extent of a young lady's musical education, those who, like my friend Irwin and I, had a taste for something a little better and more scientific, were compelled to seek it among the nymphs of the Opera, or the Theatres. I remember myself being violently in love for a whole season, with a pretty creature who used to sing the songs in Rosina delightfully, at one of the play-houses; and being driven out of the house, every time I came home, by Rachel's squalling the same songs, and accompanying herself with a jangling old harpsichord, that sounded as discordant in my ears as the tones produced by the setting of a saw."

All but Mrs. Irwin laughed heartily—not even excepting aunt Rachel—at this description of her musical powers; but the old lady, who saw herself again defeated in her dogmatisms, looked even more consequential and sour than before.

The evening passed away pretty well, though Denzil, sometimes, as he gazed at Fanny's lovely face, and heard her harmonious voice uttering, in concert with his own, the tenderest melodies, descriptive of love, turned away with a sickening sensation of the misery that perhaps awaited him; but he was careful to conceal from Fanny the effects of this impression, and she, anxious and doubtful as she felt, hailed the appearance of tranquillity as the indication of his complete restoration.

It was not till Mrs. Irwin and Miss Rachel united their powers of scolding, that Mr. Levison and his friend could be prevailed on to separate.

"It is many years since we met," observed the former,

"and seldom that we have enjoyed so many hours rationally, as well as pleasantly together; and it is hard that our pleasure should be shortened, by the prudential considerations of two foolish old women: however, I suppose we must yield, friend Ned, or else, if either you or I should chance to have the head-ache to-morrow, we shall be abused, and have our folly of to-night thrown in our teeth. Rachel, I suppose, will refuse to nurse me, much more pity me."

"Then I will nurse you, papa," said Fanny, coming behind him, and throwing her arms around his neck, while she bent over him, and pressed her ruby lips to his forehead. "You know," she continued, playfully, "that you have said that I was the best nurse in the world, except my aunt."

"Not excepting anybody," said Mr. Levison fondly, "and, besides, if you want a character, ask Denzil—you know, he said that he could be content to be sick for a year, if you would nurse him, as you did the few days he was confined, in consequence of jumping into the water with his clothes on. Nay, never blush, Denzil—I am not going to trumpet forth your good deeds."

Denzil did blush, but it was not from the cause his guardian had assigned, but from the recollections he had aroused.

Those few days to which Mr. Levison had alluded, had been the happiest days of his life; for it was while Fanny had assiduously attended his sick couch, that he had first become conscious of the nature of his own feelings towards her, and felt how necessary those tender cares, those affectionate endearments would be to his future happiness.

Fanny had, at first, appeared not to comprehend him, when he ventured to breathe this in her ear; but she, too, was awakened to the consciousness that her happiness was inseparably united with that of Denzil, and with all the candour of her nature and of innocence, she acknowledged that her heart was his own.

It was these rapturous moments that Mr. Levison's remark now brought so forcibly back to his recollection, and the contrast with what he then felt, and the misery and doubt he was now suffering, struck with such force on his mind, that, unable to conceal his agitation, he rushed precipitately from the room.

"That lad is one of the bravest, and yet the most modest in the world," said Mr. Levison. "He had nearly lost his life in saving a poor boy that had fallen into the fish-pond near the Hall—and now he cannot bear to hear it mentioned."

"Very singular modesty, indeed," said Mrs. Irwin; "but, I think, Miss Levison's condescension in nursing him, quite as remarkable. He ought to feel very grateful for it, I should think!"

"Grateful!" repeated Mr. Levison, struck with the tone in which this was pronounced. "He feels, I dare say, as he ought to do—that it was sisterly kindness of Fanny, and the same as she would have done for me."

Fanny had retreated in dismay at the sarcastic tone which Mrs. Irwin had assumed; but she returned when her father made this observation.

"Well, well," replied Mrs. Irwin, "I must yield to your superior sense, Mr. Levison; but I must repeat my observation, that I think it was a condescension on the part of your daughter. Who is this young man? What

is he, that the daughter of Mr. Charles Levison, the last representative of the ancient house——but I say no more —it is not my business, only I should be sorry if your hopes and expectations were disappointed!"

"Pshaw! pooh! nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, evidently disconcerted; "you old women are so exceedingly sharp-sighted, that you see what never was to be seen. Fanny is a good, kind-hearted girl, and Denzil one of the best lads in the world; and, I am sure, would never think of doing any thing to displease me."

"You are a man of the world, Mr. Levison, and a man of sense," returned Mrs. Irwin; "but, in this case, I must say you do not act like either; and so, with that caution, I wish you good night."

Mr. Levison remained for some minutes after she left him in silent meditation, and Fanny, though she affected not to notice it, felt confounded at the change which was visible in his countenance.

"Pshaw!" he at length exclaimed, starting suddenly up, "I am a fool, to make myself uneasy about such nonsense, which is entirely her own creating—I will think no more about it."

In spite of this wise determination, it was plain, however, that it had made a great impression on him; for, though Denzil did not appear to be conscious of any alteration in his manner, Fanny was fully aware of it. Mr. Levison was cooler, more formal, and yet not less kind, when he had occasion to address Denzil, than usual; but Fanny could see that he attentively watched every look and word of the latter, as if seeking yet fearing to find that the suspicions, which Mrs. Irwin's observations had excited in his bosom, were well founded.

"There is no occasion," thought Fanny, "for him to be suspicious; for it is plain, whatever may be the cause of the alteration, Denzil no longer wishes to entertain feelings which would be objectionable to him."

Denzil, indeed, so far from acting towards her in any manner that could give his guardian reason for suspicion, now seemed almost to forget her presence; he avoided even looking towards that part of the room in which she happened to be seated, and scarcely ever joined in conversation, when she was one of the speakers.

In fact, Denzil's thoughts, on the morning after the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Irwin, seemed wholly engrossed by some subject totally unconnected with those present; and Mr. Levison, at length, forgetting the restraint he had at first felt towards him, seemed most anxious to divert the melancholy which he so obviously betrayed.

"How do you propose to occupy yourselves to-day, young folks?" he demanded, "you know you must make the most of your time while you are in London. You cannot have seen half the lions yet—Fanny was not with us, when we visited the exhibition of pictures at Somerset House, the other day. Suppose we pass the morning there?—or, as I rather trespassed on my usual habits last night, and do not feel the better for it this morning, it will perhaps be as well that I should stay quietly at home; but you can take care of Fanny, lads, even if Rachel cannot go, as I suspect, by the wise shake of her head, she means to insinuate."

"I meant no such thing, brother," returned Miss Rachel, "though I certainly have no wish to go—for you know I hate a crowd, and take no delight in looking at pictures; but that was not what I shook my head at—but

at seeing you grow so inattentive to your health, as to think of gadding out this morning, after——"

"After what?—after getting tipsy, I suppose you would say," he replied. "Well, I do not deny that I was a little imprudent, and that I expect to suffer for it, and therefore I will stay at home, and you may stay with me, if you like; for I dare say the young ones will be quite as well pleased without us."

"Not me—I would rather—I must—that is, I have no wish to go—but Charles and Miss Levison,"—said Denzil, colouring deeply, and stammering at every word.

"Well, but Miss Levison does not want to go, you hear," replied Mr. Levison, who supposed Denzil applied this appellation to his sister.

"I did not mean that, sir," returned Denzil, looking down with confusion; "I meant that Charles would of course accompany his cousin, and excuse me, as I really am not quite well."

Mr. Levison stared at him for a few moments, in silence.

"How long has Fanny been Miss Levison with you, *Mister Montgomery*?" he at length demanded, in a sarcastic tone; "but I beg your pardon, Denzil," he added, recollecting himself; "I will not—I ought not to wish to pry into your motives for the change—but, call her what you will, Fanny, I am sure, will ever be dear to you as a sister!"

Denzil started—the blush which had crimsoned his cheek at the commencement of Mr. Levison's speech, faded into the most ghastly paleness.

"Yes, as a sister," he at length with difficulty articu-

lated—" as a sister, I will—I must love her—and only as a sister."

" Denzil, you are—what I have always thought you—a noble fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Levison; " there are some circumstances connected with Fanny's history, and with your own, which, at some future time, may be revealed to you, and which, at present, I cannot explain; but you will never, I trust—whatever my conduct may have been in other respects—*You* will never have reason to complain of it. I have been, I will still be, a father to you,—but, as regards Fanny, I must caution you not to indulge fallacious ideas. I have, perhaps, acted foolishly, in allowing you to reach this age, without having more fully explained myself; but I will now tell you, plainly, and shall take the first opportunity of telling *them*, that I hope and expect to see Fanny and Charles united at a proper age."

Denzil scarcely heard the conclusion of this sentence—for the first part assured him that his fate was decided; and he sat struggling against the feelings that overwhelmed him, while Mr. Levison proceeded, without seeming to notice his emotion, to detail the numerous advantages that would result from the proposed union of his daughter and nephew.

" Do you not agree with me, my dear boy?" he at length demanded, finding that Denzil did not assent to, or offer any argument against the positions he laid down.

" Certainly—oh yes," returned Denzil, with a heavy sigh, and a look which shewed that he was scarcely conscious of what he was saying.

" Come, my dear boy," continued Mr. Levison, " rouse yourself, and go and get ready to accompany

Fanny and Charles, who will, of course, expect you to go with them."

Fanny, however, had left the room for a purpose very different to what her father supposed. He concluded she had left them to prepare for going out, when, in fact, she had retreated to avoid doing so, and in order to conceal her grief and mortification at hearing Denzil, for the first time in his life, decline her company

Denzil did not seem to comprehend him, but he arose mechanically, as Mr. Levison arose, and tottered rather than walked to the door.

The latter followed him, in alarm—"Denzil, my dear lad, for heaven's sake, speak!" he exclaimed. "You are ill—you must not go thus—sit down, and let me ring for some one. Good heavens, I did not think you would have taken this so seriously to heart—I shall never forgive myself, if——"

But Denzil was already out of hearing of his exclamations—for, as if roused by the fear of any other person witnessing his agitation, Mr. Levison no sooner proposed calling for assistance, than he darted away up the stairs, and, entering his room, turned the key of the door, and threw himself on the ground.

His fate, then, was confirmed beyond the possibility of doubt—there was no longer even the shadow of a hope, and he was condemned to drag a weary life, struggling with a sinful, a horrible passion—for never, oh never, he felt assured, could he obliterate from his mind, the feelings with which he regarded her, whom he was now forbidden, by every law, human and divine, to think of as an object of love.

His heart throbbed, his brain seemed on fire, and his

reason appeared on the point of deserting him, as he recalled the dreadful sentence which had sealed his fate.

"Sister! sister! sister!" he repeated, in a frantic tone. "Yes, how often, in boyish innocence, have I called her by that title, and wished that she was indeed my sister! would that I could now feel as I did then! but I must not—dare not—think of her—and Charles, too ——he, in whose bosom there exists not one spark of the flame that consumes me—who never can feel for her as I have done—and ever shall do, while I exist! nothing but death can extinguish these guilty wishes and feelings! Death!—it is in my own power, and had I not better die, than continue to nourish in my bosom this horrible, this dreadful feeling?"

He started upon his feet, and began to pace the chamber, while purposes the most horrible came into his mind—but he continued in this state only for a short time. His eye accidentally rested on a book, which had been the gift of his tutor, a learned and excellent man, who had recently died. It recalled to him the precepts he had been taught—the example he had tried to emulate—and, with deep contrition, he mentally implored forgiveness for the act he had meditated. By degrees he became more calm, though not less wretched.

"Mr. Levison," he exclaimed, "will not surely insist on my remaining with her—and thus foster this guilty passion, by constantly beholding her. He will not surely constrain me to suffer the horrible torment of seeing another enjoy that happiness, which I dare not even wish to be mine, and yet must incessantly——No, he is too good, too kind, I am sure, to require it. I will propose to him that I should leave him for a time, at least, until—but that

time will never come—never must I again behold her! He cannot refuse his permission, or, if he does, I will not relinquish my purpose—no, in this instance, at least, I will be firm!"

CHAPTER VI.

> With thee, my bark, I'd swiftly go,
> Across the foaming brine;
> Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
> So not again to mine.——BYRON.

INDISPOSITION afforded Denzil a plea for confining himself to his room during the remainder of that day, and the next; nor was it merely an excuse, for the agitation of his mind had produced real bodily illness, and hourly he was tormented with remonstrances from aunt Rachel, because he would not submit to medical assistance, nor take the recipes she would have administered.

"The boy will die, brother," she exclaimed, "if he goes on in this obstinate manner. He is in a high fever, you may depend upon it."

"I will go and talk to him myself," replied Mr. Levison; "but he assured me this morning that it was nothing but a slight cold, and that he was getting better."

"I have come to talk seriously to you, my boy," he observed, as he entered Denzil's dressing-room, "Rachel tells me that she is convinced you are much worse than you will acknowledge yourself to be, and if that is the case——"

"I am not well, certainly, sir," replied Denzil; "but

medicine could do me no good, I think—if any thing would benefit me," he continued, sighing deeply, "it would be change of scene, and active employment of some sort."

"And what would you please to employ yourself in, young man?" demanded Mr. Levison, sarcastically; "bind yourself apprentice to some trade, or go for a soldier or a sailor?"

"The last would be most consonant to my inclinations, sir," returned Denzil. "I, indeed, wish to go to some distant part of the globe—but I know not how I am to gratify that wish, without your assistance."

"And do you really expect, Mr. Denzil Montgomery, that I shall lend a hand to the furtherance of such a wild-goose scheme?" said Mr. Levison. "A pretty thing, truly! A young man, brought up with every comfort of life at his command, and with a handsome fortune at his disposal, with nothing to disturb his peace but a foolish fancy crossed—nay, Denzil, you need not dart that fiery glance at me—I repeat it, a foolish fancy, that in a few years, perhaps a few months, you would yourself be surprised at, and despise;—that with nothing but this, I say, to vex him, he should want to desert his friends and his home, and embrace a toilsome and dangerous profession, of which he knows nothing. But you must do as you please, Mr. Denzil—you must act as you think proper—I can only advise, and my advice is, of course, worth nothing.

"I am sure I have never acted as if I thought so, sir," replied Denzil. "I have ever paid the greatest deference to your advice, and in the present instance I only suggested the idea, and submitted it to you for your appro-

bation. I would not do any thing of which you disapprove—but on one point I am—I must be—decided. I must quit you for a time—I cannot, without distraction, remain to——"

"You are a foolish boy, Denzil," observed Mr. Levison, seeing him pause, unable to finish the sentence; "but, at the same time that I say so, I am glad, very glad, that even your very extravagance convinces me of the rectitude of your principles. You fancy, no doubt, that you are violently in love—and to fancy it, is to be so for the time——"

"I cannot—I must not speak—I must not think on this subject," said Denzil, with extreme agitation; "but I must repeat that I cannot remain here—time will, I hope, calm the feelings which now drive me to desperation—but not while I am daily, hourly——'

"Well, well, your wishes shall be complied with; we shall see what can be done—you *shall* go somewhere —though I should not like you to make a voyage to the North Pole, or go on a journey of discovery through the wilds of Africa. But, now, this is agreed upon, do try and rouse up your spirits, there's a good lad, and come down to dinner. You cannot, you know, start off this instant—there must be some little time for preparation and consultation; and it would have a strange appearance to Charles and Fanny—whom I wish to keep ignorant of the cause of your absence—were you to persevere in secluding yourself till the last moment of your departure. Try, then, to forget what has passed, and meet them as cheerfully as usual; and, when I have finally resolved as to where it will be most expedient for you to go, during this voluntary exile, we will announce it

to them, so as to prevent its having any extraordinary appearance."

Denzil forcibly felt the impossibility of forgetting what had passed, but he was unwilling entirely to refuse this request, when his own had been so promptly complied with.

"I cannot to-day, sir, indeed I cannot meet them," he replied, "but to-morrow, at breakfast——"

"Well, to-morrow be it then," returned Mr. Levison; "and by that time I shall be prepared with my plans."

On the following morning, Denzil was first in the breakfast room, for he felt that to wait till the family were assembled, and to encounter all their eyes at once, would have shaken his fortitude, and prevented his retaining that calmness which he flattered himself he had succeeded in assuming.

Most heartily, however, did he repent his precipitation, when, a few moments after he had taken his usual chair, close to the large easy one appropriated to Mr. Levison, Fanny slowly entered the room.

Evidently unprepared to encounter *him* there, she started and hesitated; but the tone in which he uttered the usual salutations of the morning, forced as it was, seemed to re-assure her, and, though with more restraint of manner than was usual to her, she replied to him with cordiality, and with kindness expressed her pleasure at his recovery.

But those formalities having passed, each seemed to feel the aukwardness of their situation—Denzil dared not lift his eyes from the newspaper, which he held before him, without being able to comprehend a word; and Fanny began, with assumed anxiety, to examine the

superscriptions of two or three letters to Mr. Levison, which were upon the table.

In a few minutes, however, they were relieved by the entrance of Charles; but his very first words, instead of removing, increased their mutual embarrassment.

"Oh, oh," he exclaimed, "so you have made a good use of your convalescence, Denzil, I perceive—stolen a *tête-à-tête* already—I ought to beg pardon, I suppose, for interrupting it; but, the fact is, I am desperately hungry, and want my breakfast. Come, Fanny, my darling, make the tea. Aunt Rachel will be here in a moment—she has only stopped on the stairs to commence her day's recreation by scolding the housemaid for leaving one of the rods of the stair-carpeting unfastened; and, when she has convinced her of her crime, we may expect to see her."

Aunt Rachel entered at the moment—but she did not attend to the general smile with which she was greeted, but proceeded to inquire into Denzil's health, and give him some friendly cautions not "to make too free with himself," &c. &c.—which lasted till Mr. Levison hobbled in.

"I am glad to see you among us again, Denzil," he observed; "but you look like me—no great things. You had better have taken Rachel's advice, I think, and been well doctored."

"I am no friend to the doctors, you know, sir," replied Denzil, assuming a cheerful tone; "and I hope I shall get well without requiring their aid, on the present occasion."

"I hope so, too," returned Mr. Levison, "but, I will tell you candidly, I don't like your looks—that hectic

flush is not the indication of health—though, I suspect, I could prescribe a better remedy than physic."

"Any thing would be better to me than physic," replied Denzil, blushing still deeper; for he felt rather than saw that Fanny's eyes were earnestly fixed upon him.

"Well, then, I will tell you at once," replied Mr. Levison, "that my prescription would be a warmer climate for the winter than England. What say you, Denzil? Would you like to leave your friends behind you, and take a trip—say, a regular tour—through France, Switzerland, Italy, and, if you felt inclined——"

"I should, indeed, like it, sir," said Denzil, eagerly, and immediately comprehending his guardian's intention; "that is," he added, with some hesitation, "I have no wish to leave my friends behind me—but I should be highly gratified to have it in my power, with your approbation, to——"

"Say no more, my dear boy, the thing is settled; for I am convinced it will be the best thing that can be done for you—so make what arrangements you like, and as soon as you like."

"You can never be serious, brother!" exclaimed Miss Rachel, who saw with alarm the effect this sudden announcement had made upon Fanny. "You can never seriously intend—if you think Denzil's health so precarious—to suffer him to go into a strange country alone! You must be mad, to think of such a thing!"

"No, no, I am quite in my sober senses, I do assure you, Rachel," he replied. "Denzil has no ailments but such as change of air and scene will soon drive away, and he will come back to us in a few months, as hearty and

strong as ever.—But why do *you* look so pale and solemn about it, Fanny? You have more sense, I hope, than to fancy, because your friend and companion is going to leave us for a few months, that he is never coming back! Oh, yes—he will come back again, and that in time to dance at your wedding. Mind, Denzil, though —I bar your bringing back with you a French mademoiselle, or an Italian signora—keep your heart whole and sound, my lad, till you return, and in the meantime I will look out for a wife for you."

Denzil tried to speak, but his tongue refused utterance. The tone of raillery which Mr. Levison had assumed to support his spirits, completely failed of its intended effect. He dared not raise his eyes to look upon Fanny, lest he should behold, in her countenance, emotions which would completely overturn his assumed calmness, and he remained silent, while Mr. Levison proceeded to point out the route he considered it advisable for him to pursue.

During all this conversation, Charles, whose *gourmandine* was always more conspicuous than graceful, had been silently occupied with his breakfast—but, having now finished his repast, he threw himself back in his chair, observing—"And now, uncle, may I be allowed to move an amendment upon the 'original question,' as they say in the House of Commons?"

"Certainly, I am always willing to yield to your superior sagacity, nephew," said Mr. Levison, smiling.

"Well, then, I will tell you at once, that my proposition will set at rest both aunt Rachel and Fanny's fears respecting Denzil's being left alone and neglected in a foreign country—and to effect this, I simply propose that *I* may be allowed to accompany him!"

Mr. Levison shook his head—"I cannot agree to that, Charles, for many reasons—one is, that we cannot spare you. What do you think would become of us, all the winter, without you to scold and laugh at? But, seriously, I have other motives for denying your request, and will, at no very distant period, communicate them."

Denzil's heart throbbed with agony—He knew well what were the motives to which Mr. Levison alluded, and he scarcely attended to Charles's discontented murmurings at his uncle's determined refusal of his request.

Mr. Levison, however, turned a deaf ear to all he could say on the subject; and, without either noticing his sister's reprobation of his project, or Fanny's silent consternation, demanded of Denzil how long it would be before he could be ready.

"Ready! oh, I am ready now, sir—that is——" he added, checking himself, "I shall be quite ready to-morrow."

"Yes, yes—but we shall not be quite ready to part with you so quickly, Denzil," replied Mr. Levison, smiling; "besides, you will have some purchases to make, and a proper servant to procure—for your own groom would be still more at a loss in a foreign country, than he was when he first arrived here from Cumberland."

"I should be sorry to part with the lad, sir," said Denzil, "he is honest, faithful, and intelligent, and, though his manners are not very polished——"

"You mistake me—I do not wish you to part with him—but I think it will be necessary for you to have another servant, who knows something more of the world than he does."

"But I am afraid, dear sir, that two servants will be prejudicial to my wish of travelling unnoticed," observed Denzil, "and though Ned may blunder a little, and excite some merriment by his clownishness, he is quick enough in apprehension, and can soon comprehend and adapt himself to those whom he is among. Besides," he added, forcing a laugh, "I wish to begin my career economically. It will be very easy, at any time, to enlarge my establishment—but it is always rather a difficult matter to retrench."

"You are perfectly right, Denzil—perfectly right," said Miss Rachel. "It is a proof that my brother's confidence in you is not misplaced—I wish Charles had but half your prudence."

"I have never yet had an opportunity given me of showing my prudence, aunt," replied Charles.

During the whole of this conversation, Fanny had remained silent; but Mr. Levison now addressed her.

"You must give Denzil a commission, I suppose, Fanny, for some gew-gaws from Paris. I must loosen my purse-strings a little on this occasion."

Fanny tried to speak, but her lips moved, without uttering a sound.

"Oh, you need not hurry yourself, my dear," continued Mr. Levison, without appearing to notice her agitation. "You can write down what you wish for, a day or two hence."

For the first time, Denzil ventured to look at her; but the anguish she endured was so visible throughout the struggle she made to appear calm and indifferent, that it struck like a dagger to his heart, and he turned to Miss Rachel to conceal his emotion.

"You, too, madam, will honour me with some commission, will you not? I will endeavour, faithfully, to obey your instructions."

"Yes, my dear boy, there are several things I will trouble you to purchase for me," she replied, pleased with his attention; "but, as my brother says, two or three days hence will be time enough to think of that."

Denzil, however, thought otherwise. He had now his guardian's permission to go, and he felt that every moment of delay increased his misery.

Miss Rachel at last arose from the breakfast-table, and, contrary to her usual custom, Fanny quitted the room with her—Charles strolled into the library, and Mr. Levison and Denzil were then left together.

"We have managed matters pretty well, my boy," observed the former; "but I have made a discovery which has given me a great deal of pain, and has also convinced me that I have been acting very foolishly; but, however, I hope this journey will make all right again; for Fanny is a good and a sensible girl, and, I am sure, would not wish to give me pain. I have been thinking, Denzil," he continued, after a pause, "that you are perfectly right, in wishing to leave as speedily as possible. Your preparations may be easily completed, for any purchases you want, may be made as well in Paris as you could make them here; and it will be advisable to shorten, as much as possible, what I feel must be a complete purgatory to both parties. If, therefore, you think you shall be able to start to-morrow, I will give orders for a chaise—your horses can follow with Ned; or, perhaps, it will be better for you to go by the mail to Dover—travelling alone, in a post-chaise, is not the

most pleasant thing in the world for a young man, quitting, for the first time in his life, his home and friends."

"I should prefer the mail, certainly, sir," replied Denzil; "and, as it must be obvious to you how desirable it would be to avoid the ceremony of leave-taking, it would, perhaps, be the most prudent way to say nothing of my intentions, but to take my departure while you and the family are at Mr. Irwin's, to-morrow evening, and leave you to make my excuses."

"You have exactly hit upon it, my good lad—I was myself dreading the consequences of leave-taking, as you say. I should not like Charles's eyes to be entirely opened, as to his cousin's present feelings, and I very much fear that would be the case, were we to have a formal parting; but, by the means you propose, we shall certainly avoid it."

Mr. Levison now entered into the subject of the pecuniary arrangements, which Denzil, with gratitude, acknowledged were more liberal than he either wished or wanted.

"I wish you to have every indulgence and comfort the world can bestow, Denzil—your mother—but I will not speak of her, she was injured and unfortunate, and I acted cruelly, rashly, and unjustly. I have sworn to protect you—to be a father to you, in every respect, and I will keep my oath!"

Denzil hid his face with his hands, to conceal the tears which shamed his manhood.

"I am not sorry, on another account, that you are going to leave England," resumed Mr. Levison, after a few minutes' silence. "That man—how he contrived to discover you, I know not—but I know that his motives for seek-

ing you, were anything but honourable. He is a villain of the deepest die! a villain, whose life has long been forfeited to the laws of his country! Yet, I wish not to be the means of delivering him to justice! No—let his own conscience—let the life of shame and misery he is leading—be the avengers of his crimes! Your removal will, I hope, prevent his ever crossing my path again; and should ill fortune ever throw him in your way, shun him, Denzil, as you would the deadly serpent!"

"I will—I will be guided by you, sir," uttered Denzil, in an agitated tone—"One question, and one only, I would solemnly ask you. You spoke, just now, of my mother—say, is she yet living, or——"

"Denzil, I will reply to you with sincerity—I may never see you again, my dear lad, for, light as I have seemed to make of our parting, I feel that it is very probable that, before you return, I may be food for the worms! Nay, boy, do not let that thought fret you! We must all go, some time or another—and I could be better spared out of the world than many others—but I have not yet answered your question. In the first place, then, I must inform you, that what I have hitherto told you, respecting your mother's death, is not true—I most solemnly assure you, that I am as ignorant of your mother's fate as yourself,—though I believe, that, were she living, she would, long ere this, have sought her children. I have every reason to conclude that she is no more."

Charles at this moment re-entered the room, and the conversation dropped, much to Denzil's dissatisfaction; who wished to have ascertained what had been his mother's name and situation in life, in hopes that he might

thus gain some clue by which he would be enabled to trace her fate.

The word "children," however, which Mr. Levison had used, opened a new train of thoughts in his mind. It was, then, plain that Fanny and himself were the offspring of one mother, and the tales Mr. Levison had hitherto told of her birth and age, were untrue, and intended only as a means of deception. Why he should have acknowledged her as his daughter, and have educated him as the child of strangers, he could not account for; but it was very evident that such was indeed the fact.

The disclosure which Mr. Levison had made, had, however, one good effect—it prevented Denzil's entirely dwelling on the subject which had hitherto absorbed all his thoughts. The probability that his unfortunate mother was still living—living, perhaps, in poverty and misery, had awakened a train of reflections in his mind, which had at least the good effect of dividing his attention, and preventing his dwelling altogether on that which he could not consider without the deepest anguish.

"I may yet be able," he thought, "to gain some clue by which I may trace her fate, and perhaps ameliorate it. He said that she was unfortunate, and he acknowledged she had been treated with cruelty and injustice!"

A thousand tender feelings rushed into his mind—If she should be, as in all probability she was, suffering the evils of poverty, it was at least a proof that she had not voluntarily submitted to a life of guilt and shame, and that she had felt a proper spirit of resentment against her seducer,—and that seducer was his father—the man whom he had been accustomed to regard with filial reverence and respect—to whom he now owed every

advantage he possessed, and whom, even now, he could not but regard as a model of generosity and feeling, in spite of his avowal that he had acted otherwise.

There was one important circumstance, however, upon which he was still ignorant, and that was, the name and station in life of the unfortunate woman of whose fate he avowed his ignorance.

Denzil blamed himself for not having, on the instant, made the inquiry; but he considered that it would be easy to repair this omission, and he resolved to renew the subject on the very first opportunity.

Mr. Levison, however, evidently avoided recurring to the conversation, and Denzil saw the hour fast approaching which was to separate them, perhaps for ever—without having been able to get the satisfaction he so earnestly desired. He considered, however, that he could better write on the subject than speak, and he resolved that, the first time he wrote to Mr. Levison, he would plainly ask him for the particulars he so much wished to learn.

No suspicion seemed to be raised in the minds of his companions, that Denzil intended to leave them sooner than the time that had been fixed by Mr. Levison for his departure, and his declining to accompany them to dinner at Mr. Irwin's excited no surprise, as his want of both health and spirits was evidently not a feigned excuse.

"I would much rather stay at home, and keep you company, Denzil," observed the kind-hearted Rachel; "you look so pale and so melancholy, that I am sure you ought not to be left by yourself; and I know Fanny thinks so, too, though she does not say anything."

Denzil dared not trust himself to look at Fanny, as he replied, with a forced smile—"Indeed, my dear madam,

though I am very thankful, both to you and Fanny, for your kindness, you may be assured that I shall be much happier in knowing that you are enjoying yourselves with the friends who, I understand, are to meet you at Mr. Irwin's, than I should be if you were to remain at home, encouraging my vapours."

"Vapours, do you call them?" returned Miss Rachel; "indeed, Denzil, I should be very glad to believe them mere vapours; but unfortunately, I know, too well, what real illness is, to be deceived by your declaration—and I do say, decidedly, that you are really ill."

"I shall be better by and by," said Denzil, sighing; "but I am sure it would not make me better, to know I was the cause of keeping you at home, and disappointing your friends.

Rachel gave up the point, though it was evidently with great reluctance; but at the moment she was going to quit the room, followed by Fanny, whose looks alone had declared her participation in her aunt's feelings, Denzil hastily followed them.

"You are not going to leave me thus?" he observed, —"without shaking hands, and saying good-bye?"

"Heaven bless you, my dear boy" said Rachel, extending her hand with cordiality. "Do, pray, take care of yourself."

"I will," murmured Denzil; but he was scarcely conscious that he spoke, for he was now holding Fanny's trembling hand in his, while, with a look of the keenest apprehension, she seemed to seek in his countenance the cause of his excessive agitation.

"And will not you, Fanny," he observed, in a low and faltering voice,—"will not you second your aunt's prayer for my welfare and happiness?"

"Do you doubt it, Denzil?—do you doubt that I wish—that I pray—that every happiness may attend you?" she replied. "*I* am not changed, Denzil!"

"Nor I, Fanny," returned Denzil. "Alas, I feel too forcibly I am not changed! But the time will come, when you will know all, and when you do know it, you will perhaps despise and loathe me, that I am *not* changed—that I still love you desperately—madly love you—to my utter destruction love you! What a wretch, a very wretch, am I making of myself!" he added, dropping her hand, and retreating to a chair, on which he threw himself, as if overcome with agony.

Before Fanny could utter a word, the voice of Mr. Levison, speaking angrily to some one, was heard on the stairs, and Denzil started up and walked to the window, to conceal his agitation. In a moment Mr. Levison entered the room with Rachel, who had, unobserved by Denzil, hastily quitted it, at the commencement of his address to her niece.

"What is all this about, Denzil?" he demanded, "what have you been doing to frighten these foolish women into the belief that you meditate some desperate act? Rachel has been insisting that we are not to go out, or leave you alone, and Fanny looks as if you had terrified her out of her wits."

"I am very sorry, I am sure, sir, if I have inadvertently given any cause for such a supposition," returned Denzil, "but certainly, there is not the least foundation for any alarm—I neither meditate nor will commit any act of which you would not approve, and I think that is quite a sufficient guarantee for my conduct."

"How could you be so nonsensical!" said Mr. Levison, turning to Rachel, "I see nothing the matter with the

lad, more than has been for some time—he will not be better till he gets out of London; and the sooner he does so, the better; for I am sure it will not be the way to get well, to be listening to your apprehensions and conjectures—so do, pray, come along, and do not tease him any longer, with your old-womanish nonsense!"

Rachel knew it was in vain to oppose her brother, when he was decided on any subject; she therefore beckoned Fanny to follow her, leaving Denzil alone with Mr. Levison.

"I did not think you were so destitute of proper firmness, Denzil," observed the latter, reproachfully; "but I hope this is now all over, and you will act like yourself, with energy and decision. Do you intend to follow the plan we agreed on?"

"Certainly, sir," returned Denzil. "I have now seen Fanny for the last time, and I trust you will have no further cause to blame me."

"I do not blame you, my good lad—I doubt whether I should have acted half as well as you have done—but I must not stand talking; for, in the first place, they will suspect there is something between us, and, in the second, I shall keep Irwin's party waiting. Farewell, therefore, my dear boy—be sure to write, the moment you land at Calais, and by every other opportunity."

He shook Denzil by the hand, and hurried away; and, in a few moments, the latter heard the carriage drive from the door. He hurried to the window to catch a parting glimpse of Fanny—but it was too late—the blind was drawn up on that side, and he returned to his seat with a sensation of the bitterest disappointment.

The entrance of his servant, to say that the Dover

mail would start from the Gloucester coffee-house, Piccadilly, at seven o'clock, and that he had secured two places, reminded him that he had no longer any excuse for lingering there; and having written a few words to Charles, alleging that his spirits were too weak to bear a formal leave-taking, and charging him to make his excuses to the rest of the family, he desired Ned to procure a hackney-coach to convey him to Piccadilly.

Ned, however, who had no notion of stealing away from his fellow-servants, some of whom had been his companions from infancy, as if, as he said, he had "done summat he was ashamed of," had ventured, as soon as Mr. Levison was gone, to communicate to them the fact that he and his master were going to leave them; and Denzil found it impossible to avoid the importunities of Mrs. Williams, who attended herself with the tea-board, and requested that he would take tea before he left.

Denzil saw that the old lady expected the compliment that he would request her to make it for him; and he could not avoid gratifying her, though his heart was torn to pieces by her remarks during the time he was taking it.

Age and long service had given Mrs. Williams the privilege of saying any thing she pleased, and she now indulged herself in much pointed reprobation of Mr. Levison's conduct, in sending a young man like him into the world, in such a way, after bringing him up as if he had been his own son.

"I am sure," she continued, "we have always thought that it was a made match between you and Miss Fanny, and that that was my master's motive for keeping you always together at home, instead of sending you and

Mr. Charles to college, like other young men; and, whatever you may think of it, Mr. Denzil, though you do not say any thing, and so I do not know what your opinion is, but I say again—however you may take it—I am sure that Miss Fanny will go near to break her heart, at your being turned out like a dog, as one may say, to go wandering about in foreign parts. I little thought, when you began to lose your fine colour, and look so thoughtful and melancholy—I little thought what was the cause of it—but I suppose Mr. Levison had told you then what his intention was—though if I had known it, I know, whether he had been angry or pleased, I should have said a great deal that he would not have liked to hear."

Denzil was obliged to let her run on to the end of her tirade, before he informed her that it was at his own request that he was going abroad.

Mrs. Williams shook her head with an air of incredulity.

"You would persuade me, too, I dare say, that it is Miss Fanny's wish," she replied, "though the poor thing has looked like death ever since; and Lucy tells me that she does nothing but sigh and weep, when she is in her own room, and does not sleep one hour in the night—she that was all spirits, and health, and good-humour."

"Do not, pray do not say any more, Mrs. Williams—every word that you utter, makes me ten times more wretched!" exclaimed Denzil; "but, be assured, you are mistaken in thinking that Mr. Levison is the cause of my leaving England."

"I wouldn't care so much," resumed the old woman,

without appearing to notice what he said, "I wouldn't half so much care, if you had any friends or relations living to go to, or to look after you; but an orphan, without any one to care for him, or protect him—and, besides, what can be the reason that you are to go in this *clandestical* manner, without so much as saying 'good-bye' to one that has been a sister to you, ever since you were both babes together, as I may say? Mr. Thomas says that he can see through it all, and that master wants Miss Fanny to marry her cousin, and so sends you away, because he thinks you might be a hindrance. And, indeed, Mr. Denzil, if that's his plea, I should not wonder—for, not that I should say it, and I don't speak it out of any disparagement to my master's nephew neither—but he certainly is no more to be compared to you, than chalk is to cheese."

Ned entered to say that the coach was waiting, and that it wanted but a quarter of the hour appointed, and Denzil, glad to escape from the torture he was suffering, rose to depart.

The old woman was affected, even to tears, when he shook hands with her, and the servants all crowded into the hall, to utter their wishes for his safety and speedy return.

Denzil could scarcely command his voice to reply to them with firmness, and having left a handsome testimony of his gratitude towards them, in the hands of the butler, he threw himself into a corner of the coach, and was soon out of hearing of their prayers and blessings.

CHAPTER VII.

The course of true love never did run smooth.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE first inquiry of Miss Rachel Levison, when she returned from her visit, was whether Mr. Denzil was gone to bed.

"He is gone out, madam," replied the footman, who did not like abruptly to communicate Denzil's departure.

"Out!" repeated Miss Rachel, with astonishment.

"Out!" echoed Charles, looking at his uncle, whom he expected to see break out into a storm of passion; but, to his surprise, Mr. Levison's countenance testified neither anger nor alarm.

"What can be the meaning of this, brother?" demanded Rachel, turning to Mr. Levison.

"It will all be explained, I dare say, to your satisfaction," he returned; "if you will come up stairs, and not keep us standing here, where the wind is cutting my legs like a knife! I shall be laid up with the rheumatism, to-morrow, I expect."

Rachel hurried up stairs at this intimation, and, as soon as they entered the drawing-room, again demanded if her brother could explain the cause of Denzil's acting so madly, so inconsistently.

"He has done neither the one nor the other!" said Mr. Levison; "the truth is——but where is Fanny?"

"Good heavens, brother, how you alarm me!" exclaimed Miss Rachel. "Fanny cannot be far off—she was here, this moment—but what has that to do with Denzil?—I am all impatience——"

"I dare say you are," returned Mr. Levison, drily; "but is it not rather surprising that Fanny should not be equally anxious to know what has become of her friend and companion?"

"So it is, indeed," said Miss Rachel, recollecting herself, "I am really surprised that she should go away at such a moment,—but do, pray, explain——"

"It is all explained, aunt," observed Charles, who had been reading Denzil's note to him, which had been put into his hand by a servant; "Denzil is gone—has taken French leave, because he could not bear a formal parting."

"The mad, foolish, headstrong boy!" exclaimed Rachel, "and all the pains, then, I have taken, will be thrown away! I was this whole morning preparing the famous cordial that has cured so many of consumption——"

"But never cured one of our own family," interrupted Mr. Levison; "for, I believe, three-fourths of the last generation of the Levisons have died of decline, though they were no doubt plentifully dosed with your famous recipe. I think, Denzil shewed much discrimination in leaving it behind."

"And, I dare say, he has not even provided himself with flannel clothing," continued Miss Rachel.

"Which he cannot have the slightest occasion for, in

the genial climate to which he is going," added Mr. Levison; "but do, pray, if you have concluded your list of his omissions, go and see what has become of Fanny—learn what has induced her to run away in this unaccountable manner."

"I am going, brother—but I only want to know whether Denzil had your approbation——"

"He had—he had—there's enough of it—now do go and look for Fanny."

"What has my brother taken into his wise head about Fanny?" said Miss Rachel, as she left the room. "Surely, he does not fancy that she has run away, too—Poor girl, she will fret, I dare say, when she finds Denzil is gone!"

Fanny, however, was already in bed, and, as she pretended, almost asleep, when Miss Rachel approached her bed-side.

"Would you believe it, my dear," she observed, "Denzil is gone—and without even saying good-bye?"

"Indeed!" replied Fanny, without raising her head from her pillow; "well, I am not surprised, aunt; for it is all of a piece with his late conduct. But, never mind, do not let it disturb you—It shall not break my rest!" and again she pretended to be too sleepy to talk.

Rachel, however, unsuspicious as she was, could scarcely believe that this indifference was real. She looked at Lucy, who was busied in folding her mistress's dress, and immediately read in her countenance a confirmation of her suspicions; and, having waited till the latter had concluded her task, she beckoned her out of the room, leaving Fanny apparently fast asleep.

"What did your mistress say, when she came up

stairs, Lucy?" she demanded, "Was she aware, do you think, that Mr. Denzil was gone?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, I am sure she was," returned the girl, "though she did not say a word; but began to undress herself, the moment she came into the room; but she looked—oh, so dreadful!—that I was quite frightened. I told her that I was sure she was very ill, but she said, 'Oh, no, Lucy, I am only tired and sleepy—so make haste, and undress me!' and I heard her mutter to herself—'No, never—never—never! I will die first!'"

"Ah! I know very well what that meant," said Miss Rachel, "but my brother is so obstinate!"

"Fanny is gone to-bed, brother," she observed, on entering the drawing-room.

"Without even saying good-night?" returned Mr. Levison, in an angry tone. "I am surprised that she should have so little regard to common civility."

"You should make some little allowance for her, brother—she is much agitated at what she has heard from you this evening."

"Pshaw, nonsense! what right can she have to be agitated—what right can a girl like her have to form——"

Miss Rachel glanced towards Charles, who, with Denzil's note still in his hand, was standing apparently in deep meditation.

"What is the matter with you, Charles?" demanded Mr. Levison, "you look as if you were displeased at your friend's giving you the slip; but I think he acted very prudently and wisely."

"Very likely," returned Charles; "but I was not

thinking of that just now—I was thinking how hard it is that I, who would give the world to enjoy the advantages he has, of seeing every thing worth seeing, am to be cooped up here; and he, who wants to stay at home, is driven abroad."

Mr. Levison was startled at this indication of rebellion against his authority——

"I thought I gave you a pretty clear explanation of my views, this evening, young man," he observed. "I certainly was forced into it rather prematurely, but it was my intention to acquaint you with my wishes the first opportunity; and, let me tell you, Charles, I believe there are few young men who would receive such an intimation with the indifference you seem to shew. Fanny Levison, with the fortune I can give her, is a match for any nobleman in England; and you ought to consider the offer I have made you as the highest proof of my regard for you and your interests——"

"I know all that, uncle," interrupted Charles; "and, I am sure, I am not ungrateful to you, but——"

"But what?" demanded Mr. Levison angrily, observing he hesitated to finish the sentence.

"Why then, sir, I will tell you the truth," said Charles. "I have no inclination to marry—and, even if I had, I have been so accustomed to consider Denzil and Fanny——"

"I tell you it is no such thing, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, with vehemence. "Denzil knows his duty to me better than to think of such a thing—and it would be well for you to imitate his example, and learn to pay proper deference to the dictates of those who are the best judges of what is right and proper for you."

"My uncle will not persuade me that I don't know what is right and proper in this instance," said Charles, after Mr. Levison had quitted the room, in violent resentment at the disposition his nephew had shown to oppose his wishes. "I know it *cannot* be right and proper that he should endeavour to make Denzil, Fanny, and me miserable, in order to gratify his whims; for if he thought Denzil good enough for a match with Emma Lazenby,—which I know he did, for I could see he tried to set him off in her eyes, at every opportunity, before we left Cumberland,—he cannot pretend that he is not a sufficient match for his daughter. Besides, why should I be forced into matrimony against my inclination?—I am not the first of the family who has preferred a single life!"

Rachel, to whom these observations were addressed, observed, with a smile, "You would be the first, Charles, I suspect, who at your age formed a resolution, or even felt an inclinatlon, to live single; and, I must confess, I very much doubt your sincerity, in expressing any aversion to matrimony. I am inclined to believe, that if it were Emma Lazenby, instead of Fanny Levison, whom your uncle proposed to you——"

"Indeed, aunt, you are mistaken!" interrupted Charles, colouring violently. "Emma is a very nice, good-humoured girl, and I was always glad of her society, because she is so cheerful that she made us all alive, when she was at the Hall—but I never thought of her in any other light."

"I am glad to hear it," returned Miss Rachel, "because, whatever your uncle might think of her, as a suitable match for Denzil, I do not think he would agree to

your marrying her, even if he were to give up his plan of uniting you to your cousin, which he is not at all likely to do."

"But which he will be forced to do, I rather suspect!" muttered Charles, as he bade his aunt good-night. "I wish," he continued, as soon as he got out of hearing, "I only wish that Denzil had stayed, and supported me, as I would have supported him, and I would have been bound to conquer—though I will defeat them now, for I will not have Fanny, and that's flat—not only because I don't want to be shackled with a wife, before I've known what it is to be my own master, but because I know it would break poor Denzil's heart, if any one should have her but himself."

Fanny's appearance at the breakfast-table, on the following morning, sufficiently betrayed the effect which the occurrences of the evening had produced upon her. Yet she affected to be in good spirits—spoke of Denzil's clandestine departure as a trick, which she would some time or other revenge upon him; and laughed at her aunt's regret at his having left behind all the preparations she had made for him, or without hearing the many excellent cautions she intended to have given him.

"There is another misfortune, too, which you have forgotten to enumerate, my dear aunt," she observed, laughing. "Denzil has, by his stolen march, avoided the trouble of executing our commissions, of which, encouraged by papa's promised liberality, I had ventured to make a tolerable long list—I suppose, however, I must make up my mind to be content with my old frocks, and scarfs, and shawls, and ribands, instead of figuring, as I had anticipated, in new ones, *à la Francoise*."

"Oh, no, Fanny, we can easily manage to repair that omission," replied Mr. Levison, who took all she said literally, though it was very obvious that Fanny was endeavouring, by this raillery and badinage, to disguise her uneasiness. "We can very easily write to Denzil, as soon as he gets to Paris, and request him to purchase what you want."

"Oh, no, papa, pray do not burthen the poor young man, with any trouble on my account," returned Fanny, in a sarcastic tone. "My aunt, of course, may do as she pleases about her Eau de Cologne, and the rest of her wants; but I am quite content with English manufactures. But recollect, papa, although I shall certainly not trouble Denzil to buy any thing for me, I shall call upon you for the money you intended to bestow upon me for that purpose—I dare say I can find a better way of disposing of it, than in buying French gew-gaws."

"I am ready to answer your demand, whenever you please to draw—provided you are not too unconscionable, Fanny," returned Mr. Levison, who was delighted to see his daughter bear so well an event which he had feared would have had a very different effect upon her; but Fanny, though she thus successfully disguised her feelings, was in reality suffering the bitterest anguish, at Denzil's apparent desertion and cruelty.

Her father had on the preceding evening, in reply to an insinuation of Mrs. Irwin's, respecting Denzil's obvious attention to Miss Fanny Levison, replied——

"You are quite mistaken, I assure you, Mrs. Irwin—Denzil Montgomery has no such views or intentions as you attribute to him; and, as I wish at once to put an end to all conjectures on the subject, and do justice to

the poor lad, I will assure you that Denzil is acquainted with, and fully approves the union which I propose shall take place between my daughter and her cousin Charles. There are reasons which render it impossible that Denzil should entertain such feelings towards Fanny as you more than hint at; and I trust you will be convinced of it, when I tell you that he is going immediately to the Continent, and will not return until long after Fanny has been united to Charles."

This, though said in a low voice, and apparently not intended to be heard by either of the parties concerned, reached the ears of both. Fanny had been somewhat prepared for it, by the hints she had received from her aunt; but Charles was utterly astonished at a proposition which had never for a moment entered his thoughts, and which was quite as unacceptable to him, as to his cousin.

Charles, indeed, spoke the truth, when he assured both his uncle and his aunt Rachel, that he had never yet entertained a thought of matrimony; for he was too volatile, and too little accustomed to reflection, ever to have thought of any plan for his future life; and looked forward to his attaining the age of manhood, only as the period when he should be freed from the troublesome restraint in which he was kept by his uncle, who, conscious that his nephew possessed no extraordinary strength of mind, or powers of conduct, seemed to think it necessary on all occasions to treat him as a boy, incapable of judging for himself, and scarcely to be trusted out of sight.

This was certainly the worst method Mr. Levison could have adopted, of improving his nephew's deficiencies; but Mr. Levison had never been a very accurate

reasoner, and in seeking to remedy present evils, he frequently overlooked the important ones which might result from the course he pursued.

But though Charles's habits of dependence on his uncle and Denzil, who were in every case his oracles, had prevented his reflecting very deeply on the subject, it was certain he entertained a more than ordinary predilection in favour of Emma Lazenby, the young lady to whom his aunt had alluded, on the evening when Mr. Levison had thought fit to make known his intentions respecting the future settlement of his daughter.

Emma was the only child of a widow lady of family and fortune, and was certainly, as Charles had delineated her, a lively, good-humoured girl; but these qualities were not her only attractions. She was also very pretty, and would be, if she married with her mother's consent, very rich; and these various advantages had suggested to Mr. Levison's mind, in one of her visits to the Hall, that she would be a very suitable wife for Denzil, who was a very great favourite with her mother.

Denzil, however, had turned a deaf ear to Mr. Levison's hints, and the young lady herself seemed totally unconscious of his project. Charles,—whose gaiety and love of fun (as he called it) approximated much nearer to her own disposition, than the more grave and sensitive Denzil, who sometimes even ventured to disapprove and prevent their schemes of mischief, when they were likely to wound the feelings of others,—was the decided favourite of the romping, mirth-loving Emma; and the preference she uniformly showed him, was not without a corresponding effect. Charles Levison's heart was not susceptible of any very deep or tender feelings, but his aunt's

observation, and Mr. Levison's open avowal of his intentions towards him, now awakened him to the fact that he preferred Emma Lazenby much before his cousin Fanny, and infinitely before any other girl in the world.

"If I am to marry, I will have Emma, and nobody else!" was his magnanimous resolution, when he retired for the night; "and so I will tell my uncle, the first opportunity."

That opportunity, however, did not occur, until letters from Denzil to himself and Mr. Levison, announced the arrival of the former in France, and related that he had formed a very pleasing acquaintance with an Irish family, whom he had first met on board the packet, and to whom the name and situation in life of Mr. Levison seemed well known, though they had not explained by what means they had become acquainted with them.

"Mr. Delaney, the head of the family, is a very well-informed, intelligent man," wrote Denzil, "and his lady is a clever, sensible woman—the daughters are two romping, laughing Hebes, to whom my gravity, and the melancholy which I cannot get rid of, when I think of the friends I have left behind me, render me a very unsuitable companion, though they are too good-natured to laugh at me. They often put me in mind of our pretty little favourite, Emma Lazenby—especially the younger, who resembles her in person, and still more in the love of mischief. The only son is about my own age, and the least agreeable of the family; for his education seems to have been neglected, which I am much surprised at, and he is impetuous and overbearing in his manners; though I am perhaps ungrateful in making these observations—for to me he is extremely courteous; but you charged me,

dear sir, to be particularly candid in my remarks upon such society as I might fall into, and, you see, I am literally obeying your instructions.

"I do not know whether our travels together will extend farther than Paris, whither we shall proceed in a few days, Mr. Delaney having very politely expressed a wish that I would remain with them until then. He has, indeed, been of much service to me in this my first debut, having before travelled on the Continent, and being thoroughly acquainted with the customs, &c. which, without his assistance, would rather have embarrassed such a novice as myself, especially with such an incumbrance as Ned, who is a more inveterate 'John Bull' than ever—and, I believe, will never smile again, until he gets back to canny Cumberland. Ned, indeed, extends his antipathies to foreigners so far, that he will not condescend to acknowledge even the natives of the sister kingdom as his countrymen; and I have had no little trouble, I assure you, to induce him to be upon civil terms with Mr. Delaney's Irish servants. A scrape, however, which he got into with some of the town's-people yesterday, and which he was indebted to the adroitness of the two Irishmen for getting out of, without farther mischief than the loss of his new *chapeau*, has, I fancy, taught him the policy of forming a treaty offensive and defensive with his companions; and I trust I shall have no more domestic broils. Mr. Delaney is highly diverted at Ned's nationality, but I have had some difficulty in reconciling his son to it.

"Tell my dear aunt,—for so I hope I may still be allowed to call her,—that she need be under no apprehensions for me; for, were I inclined to neglect her

advice and cautions against carelessness, she has an excellent substitute in Mrs. Delaney, who is quite what she would call a motherly woman. She is as kind and careful of me, as if I were her own son."

"I do not like these sudden friendships," observed Mr. Levison, "I shouldn't at all wonder if these people turn out no great things after all."

"That is just like you, brother," said Miss Rachel, "always suspecting people, though nobody is more apt to be taken with fresh faces than yourself. Now, for my part, I am very happy to think the poor lad has met with such comfortable people—are not you, my dear?" turning to Fanny.

"Very," returned Fanny, laconically, "but that is not all the letter—is it, papa?"

"All that is worth reading, my dear," replied Mr. Levison, hastily glancing his eye over the remainder of the letter, which he then put into his pocket. "The boy is mad!" he murmured, after some minutes' silence, during which he appeared to have been meditating on something that had been said in the latter part of the letter. "He has certainly lost his senses!" he repeated, apparently unconscious that all eyes were fixed upon him with curiosity, and that Fanny's pale face varied from pale to red, and then to pale again, twenty times in a minute.

"I don't think he has been in his right senses a long time," observed Charles. "I am sure he has not acted as if he was—but what is the matter now, uncle?"

"Nothing that concerns you, nephew," returned Mr. Levison, with quickness; "nor, indeed," he added, after a moment's hesitation, during which he had, for the first time, observed Fanny's agitation, "is there anything that

anybody need be concerned about——for it is all foolish nonsense, and so I shall tell him, when I write."

No further remarks were made, but Fanny's looks betrayed that her father's explanation was by no means satisfactory to her.

Again and again, during the course of the day, Mr. Levison reverted to Denzil's acquaintance with the Delaneys, and each time with increased dissatisfaction.

"What can they know of me?" he observed; "I am sure I know nothing of them—for, to my knowledge, I never heard the name before—besides, if they are what they pretend to be, people of respectability, why not at once say where and how they know me?"

"They must at least be people who move in a respectable sphere," returned Miss Rachel, "for Denzil speaks of their servants, as if they had several."

"Irish bog-trotters, I suppose, hired for thirty shillings a year, and fed upon butter-milk and potatoes," said Mr. Levison.

"How can you be so uncharitable, brother?" observed Rachel.

"And how can you be so credulous, sister?" said Mr. Levison; "you would let any sharper impose upon you, if they made a little show. I tell you again, I do not like this new acquaintance, and I shall certainly speak my mind on the subject, when I write."

"Poor Denzil! he will be finely tormented with my uncle's wise cautions," observed Charles, when Mr. Levison left the room; "but I only wish, notwithstanding his suspicions, that I was with these Delaneys! I should see a little more life than I do here, for I am

sure it is enough to tire one to death, to go on in this humdrum manner."

Fanny smiled for the first time since Denzil's departure. "A fine compliment you pay your companions, Charles," she replied.

"Well, Fanny, I do not mean any thing to your disadvantage," he replied; "but, you must own, that the house is ten times duller, and my uncle ten times more sour and disagreeable, since Denzil has been gone. I am sure, I wish we were down in Cumberland again, for there I could go out hunting or fishing, or doing something, without being lectured or tormented with questions or advice, as I am here, where I cannot go out for half an hour, without my uncle's being in a fright, and fancying I have got into some mischief or another. I declare I think it will be a good plan for me to get into some scrape, on purpose to drive him down into the country—for I would not give a farthing to stay in London, now Denzil is gone."

"Nor I," said Fanny, sighing deeply.

"Cousin," said Charles, looking earnestly at her, "did you hear the fine plan my uncle has got in his head, and which I suspect has been at the bottom of all Denzil's strange vagaries, and the cause of his being sent off—for I'll never believe he went voluntarily."

"I did hear it, Charles," returned Fanny, "and heard it with the same feelings that I suspect and hope you did."

"If you mean that you heard it with a determination never to marry without you loved, and without the object of your choice loved you, I certainly *did* hear it with the same feelings and determination," replied

Charles, "and, to speak my mind candidly, Fanny, that could not be the case now; for, as to love, I know nothing about it yet, and I hope I never shall, if it is to make me as miserable as it does most people; and, as to you, I know very well that you could never love me as a husband."

"You are quite right, Charles," said Fanny, seeing he expected an answer. "I have been too much accustomed all my life to regard you as a brother, to have any other feelings towards you."

"Ah, it is not exactly that, Fanny," returned Charles; "because you might just as well say the same of Denzil, but the fact is, I know that Denzil and you do love one another; and I think it is very hard and very shameful that you should be parted, just to please my uncle's whims."

"And, allowing all this," said Fanny, while an arch smile for a moment illumined her fair face, at her cousin's plain matter-of-fact manner, "I say, Charles, granting it all to be perfectly correct, what is to be done? Denzil, you see, has renounced me without a struggle, and it cannot be supposed that, whatever may have been my feelings towards him, I shall ever seek to renew the bond which he has so readily broken. Nevertheless, my dear cousin, I entreat you not to be at all alarmed at my father's suggestions, for I will give you any pledge you like, that I will never agree to them; and, to imitate your own plain manner of dealing, Charles, I will promise you solemnly, that neither my father nor any one else shall induce me, for a moment, to think of you as a husband."

"I know all that, very well, Fanny," returned Charles; "but that is not exactly what I was aiming at—I know

that you never give me credit for any one thought; and you and Denzil have often ridiculed me for my Machiavelianism, as you called it; but I think I have something in my head now, which would set every thing straight, put an end to my uncle's wise speculations about you, and perhaps be the means of his consenting for you to marry Denzil."

"And what is your present device?" demanded Fanny, with surprise.

"Why, then," said Charles, "I will tell you at once, Fanny. Suppose I was to get married to some one else, without consulting my uncle about it, do not you think that would at once set the matter at rest?"

"As far as concerns you and me, certainly," said Fanny, scarcely able to forbear laughing at his manner; "but it strikes me that there are some difficulties to the execution of your plot. In the first place, where are you to find the lady, because you have declared that——"

"Oh, never you mind that," interrupted Charles, with quickness. "I only want to get to Cumberland again, and then you shall see!"

"Oh, I understand you, now, Charles," replied Fanny; "but do you think Mrs. Lazenby would consent that Emma——"

"If Emma is the girl of spirit I take her for," said Charles, "we need not care anything about whether she consents or not. We shall not, like you and Denzil, be contented to be miserable, because other people choose to be contrary, and think themselves wiser than us."

"But has Emma any idea of your intentions?" demanded Fanny, who began to discover that Charles's plot was not merely the thought of the moment, but had been

before entertained by him. "I did not know that she and you corresponded," she added.

"If you will promise to keep the secret faithfully, Fanny, I will tell you all about it," he replied.

"Can you suppose, Charles, that I would be so ungenerous as to betray you," returned Fanny, "when you are acting so disinterestedly towards me?"

"Well, then, read this," producing a letter from his pocket-book. "Emma and I agreed," he continued, "that if anything particular happened to either of us, we would write to one another; so, when Denzil went away, and I found out what my uncle's intentions were, I wrote to tell her, and this is the answer I received."

"You have been very sly, cousin Charles," said Fanny, smiling, as she opened the letter, which was as follows—

"DEAR, DEAR CHARLES,

"How you have surprised me about Denzil, and how I do pity poor Fanny, who, I am sure, must be ready to break her heart—I know I should break mine, if I were in her situation, though, indeed, dear Charles, I've got quite enough to fret about myself, I do assure you, though I've made up my mind I will not fret, neither—for I know that neither mamma, nor any one else, can make me have a man I don't like—and, if you really are true and sincere, Charles, in what you say, I will solemnly promise that I will never, never marry any one but you! But you will wonder what all this is about —for I forgot that I have not written to you since I answered your first letter, when you first went to London—I was dull enough then, for I did nothing but think of you, and what pleasures you were enjoying in town,

while I was going on in the same dismal manner, from day to day, and week to week.

"Well, mamma found out, at last, that I had lost my spirits, and was losing my colour—so she proposed that we should take a trip, for a week or two, to Scarborough—I was very well pleased, you may be sure; but I wish now I had never gone, for at the rooms I danced with a gentleman, named Sir Francis Thoresby, who took it into his head to fall in love with me, though he is, I am sure, ten years older than I am; but mamma says, ten years is nothing in a man's age—but he's a grave, stern, wise-looking gentleman, one that nobody never dare laugh with, nor at, and therefore, you may be sure, not a bit suitable to me. He was a very good dancer, though, for all his gravity—and as you know I hate a bungling partner, I was not sorry when I found that he always selected me for his partner, whenever he had an opportunity; and as we stayed a fortnight, we were often together. But this was not all, he contrived to make himself quite a favourite with mamma, and asked and received permission to visit us, if he should come into our part of the country, which he said he should very soon, as he had a relation living at Theswick.

"I was still so stupid that I did not suspect what all this meant, until, a few days after we got home, mamma put a letter into my hand from Sir Francis, proposing himself as my husband, and offering such settlements as mamma said were unexceptionable, and such as no woman in her senses could think of refusing.

"'No woman, perhaps, mamma,' I replied, 'who was a suitable match for him—but I am not a woman, but a girl, not out of her teens, and I certainly shall refuse them.'

"I need not tell you how mamma raved and stormed, when she found that I persisted in my determination—nor how frightened I was, spite of all my spirit and obstinate resolution that I would keep my word to you, when I saw Sir Francis Thoresby, in his dashing curricle and pair of beautiful bays, and his two servants with bright new grass-green liveries, with plenty of gold lace, drive up the long elm avenue.

"Well, to make short of my story, here he has been ever since, backwards and forwards, walking and driving mamma and me about every where, making parties for us, on the water and on the land, until it is all over the country that he is going to marry me directly; but he is not one bit the nearer gaining my heart by all this, though you know I dearly love gaiety and pleasure, and that I believe is the reason you and I always agreed so well together.

"I have not yet told mamma that I have made up my mind never to have anybody but you—but I am resolved I will not have Sir Francis—for if you were to be false to me, and marry Fanny, after all, I will never have any one, although I hate the name of old maid.

"I thought of writing to Fanny, but I do not know what I should say to her, for perhaps she would be offended if she were to know that you have told me all about her and Denzil—though I must say, it is quite foolish delicacy of her and Denzil, too, to suffer themselves to be made miserable all their lives, just to please Mr. Levison, who, cross as he sometimes used to be, I never thought could have been so cruel.

"I have come quite to the end of my paper, so I cannot write any more, except to beg that you will make

as much haste as you can to come back, and see if you and I together cannot devise some means to get rid of this Sir Francis, whom I hate more and more every day.

"Your affectionate
"EMMA."

"You see, cousin Fanny," said Charles, as she returned him the letter, "I need not long be looking for the lady, as you said—but I should like to have your advice, whether I ought first to apply to Mrs. Lazenby, and tell her how attached Emma and I are to each other. She used to be very partial to you, and perhaps, if I were to state fairly to her how happy she would make, not only her daughter and me, but you and Denzil, if she would agree to my having Emma——"

"I am afraid, Charles, that the knowledge that your uncle has quite different views for you, would be very little inducement to Mrs. Lazenby to favour your suit, and would not be likely to procure her consent. On the contrary, I am apt to think that it would only increase her predilection for Sir Francis, and induce her to be more positive with Emma."

"I have been thinking so myself," said Charles, with a desponding look, "and I do not know how to act—for, you know, neither Emma nor I are of age; and it will be so long to wait—besides, I have another reason to wish it settled; and that is, that I think it will be the means of making you and Denzil happy—because, if I were quite out of the way, I cannot see what reasonable objection he could make to your marrying Denzil."

"Perhaps not, my dear cousin," returned Fanny,

"but I entreat that you will act only for your own happiness, and not think at all about me or Denzil; because, to tell you a secret, I do not believe Denzil entertains any such wishes as you seem to attribute to him. To imitate your candour, Charles, and speak plainly, as you have done, I will tell you that I do not think that Denzil Montgomery, were he at liberty to do so, would make me the object of his choice. You look incredulous, Charles—but, I assure you, I do not speak this on slight grounds—nay more, I have every reason to conclude, from his own words and observations, that he has himself created a bar between us, which can never be removed. How this is, or can be possible, I am at a loss to understand!—I have puzzled myself, till I have almost lost my power of reflecting, in trying to comprehend what passed at our last interview, but of this I am assured, that, whatever has occurred, Denzil has given up every idea of——"

The tears, which she had struggled to restrain during this explanation, now burst forth, and suppressed the remainder of the sentence, while Charles in vain attempted to console her by declaring that she must be mistaken, for that he was sure he knew every secret of Denzil's heart, and knew that that heart was undividedly hers.

"I will know, however, and that soon," he thought to himself, "what Denzil's real sentiments and intentions are; for I will write to him, and tell him all that has passed, and insist upon his giving a direct answer to my question—whether, if my uncle could be brought to reason, he would not be most happy to come back directly, and marry Fanny?"

"Never mind, cousin," he observed, "do not cry—for

if Denzil could act as you think, he would not be worth your tears; and, if you are mistaken, you can have no reason to cry—for I know all will be right, as soon as ever I am out of the way, and that will not be long first, you may depend upon it—only let me hit upon some plan to frighten the old gentleman down into the country, and I will be bound Emma and I will lay our heads together to some purpose, in a short time."

Fanny smiled through her tears, at the cavalier tone in which her cousin spoke of his intentions—but a moment's reflection told her that she was wrong, thus tacitly to encourage her cousin in views which might involve himself and Emma in misery. Both were minors, and both were entirely dependant on their friends and guardians. Fanny, indeed, was inclined to suspect that, though Charles was the legal heir of the Levison estates, after the death of his uncle, he had but a very slender provision independent of him until then; and as to Emma's fortune, she had heard that it entirely depended on her marrying with her mother's consent.

As cautiously and delicately as possible she hinted these circumstances to Charles, who however treated them with great indifference.

"I dare say," he observed, "my uncle would be very angry, and swear that he would never forgive me—and it is likely Mrs. Lazenby would do the same, for a little while—but they would both be brought to reason, as soon as the thing was done; and we very well know their pride and dignity, if nothing else, would prevent their letting us starve."

Fanny could offer no farther arguments to dissuade him, and Charles retired to ponder over the important

plans he formed, and to write to Denzil Montgomery, requiring a categorical answer to the questions he proposed—namely, whether he would not advise him to run away with Emma Lazenby, if he could not succeed any other way; and whether, if he did so, he (Denzil) would not instantly come back, and demand permission of Mr. Levison to marry Fanny.

"Fanny would persuade me," he observed, in conclusion, "that you have no such wishes, and that there is some bar to your union, which can never be removed—but I do not believe a word of this, and so I told her—but I could not persuade her out of it; and so I beg you will be candid, in reply to this, and write so that I may shew her your letter, if you will not write to her; and I suppose, with your usual romantic generosity, you have given a pledge to my uncle, that you will not tempt her from her duty."

"Have you anything to say to Denzil, either of you?" inquired Mr. Levison, the next morning at breakfast-time. "I am going to write to him, this morning."

No one answered but Miss Rachel, who said that she wished her brother would request Denzil to execute the commissions she had given to him, previous to his departure.

"And have you nothing to say to him, Fanny?" demanded Mr. Levison, looking earnestly at her.

"No, papa," she returned, with assumed carelessness, "nothing—only that I am glad he is so comfortably situated, and that I wish him all possible happiness."

"And I shall say nothing at all, sir, for I am too angry at his abrupt departure, and his silence to me," said Charles, giving Fanny a sly look.

"Very well, I shall faithfully attend to your instructions," observed Mr. Levison.

Through the means of the servant who was entrusted with the task of conveying Mr. Levison's letter to the post-office, Charles obtained the address to which Denzil's letters were to be forwarded; and, at the very moment that Mr. Levison was congratulating himself that all communication, which could threaten any danger to his favourite project, was cut off between Denzil, his daughter, and Charles, the letter of the latter, destined to reanimate Denzil's hopes, was on its way to him.

"Don't be surprised or frightened at any thing you see or hear, to-night," said Charles to his cousin, a few mornings after the letter to Denzil had been despatched. "I have been trying in vain to persuade my uncle to go down to the Hall, a few weeks earlier than he intends—but he is as obstinate as a bear, now Denzil is gone, and so I must try what I can do in the way of manœuvre."

"Mind you do not get yourself into mischief, with your manœuvring," replied Fanny, smiling—"what are you going to do?"

Charles shook his head with an important air—

> "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest '*coz*,'
> Till you approve the deed,"

he replied, as he quitted the room.

At dinner-time, Charles did not make his appearance.

Mr. Levison testified great anger and impatience at his negligence, and, after waiting a few minutes, commenced dining without him.

During the whole of the meal he continued grumbling and scolding—but when, after having kept it much longer than usual on the table, the cloth was at length removed,

an apprehension began to seize him that something more than mere negligence and inattention must occasion his nephew's absence.

Charles's servant was summoned, but he only knew that his master said he should go for a stroll into the park till dinner-time.

Another half hour passed away, and Mr. Levison's impatience and anxiety increased—the two footmen were then despatched, to search the park for him, but they returned without any intelligence that was satisfactory, although one of them had learned that a young gentleman, exactly answering Mr. Charles Levison's description, had been seen to leave the park, by the Queen-square gate, in company with two females.

Mr. Levison was frantic with rage and anxiety at this information, especially as it was given in the presence of Fanny.

Midnight had nearly arrived, but Charles had not made his appearance—and Fanny was on the point of endeavouring to relieve her father's now really painful anxiety, by repeating what her cousin had said in the morning, when a loud knocking was heard at the door; and before Mr. Levison, followed by Fanny and aunt Rachel, could reach the bottom of the staircase, the voice of Charles, in a most uproarious state of intoxication, was heard in the hall.

"Where have you been, sir?—what is the meaning of this disgraceful scene?" exclaimed Mr. Levison, who now perceived that his nephew was accompanied by two watchmen, and that the hall was nearly filled by strangers, who had pressed in with them. "Good Lord, we shall be all robbed and murdered!" exclaimed the old gentle-

man, shrinking back, and elevating the crutch-stick with which he always supported himself.

Fanny ran up a few stairs, more than half frightened, though she thought she caught a glance from her cousin, which betrayed that he was not in reality so incapable of conducting himself as he pretended to be.

"Watchmen!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, "why do you not do your duty? why don't you turn all these people out? what business have they here, at this time of night?"

"They are witnesses, your honour, against your son here, who has been breaking the lamps, and abusing us like pickpockets," replied both the watchmen at once.

"Aye, and—now I'll break—both your heads," hiccuped Charles, making a rush towards them. "I'll tea—teach you to interrupt a-a gentleman in his diversions."

Charles now attempted to run at the watchmen, but before he reached them, he fell on the ground, and a loud shout and laugh from the bystanders raised Mr. Levison's anger and consternation still higher.

"What is it you demand? what satisfaction do you want, my friends?" he demanded.

"Why you see, your honour, his young honour has broken two or three lamps, by throwing half-pence at 'em, and he gave us a precious race after him, up to this here door, besides squeezing my fingers in trying to shut me out, when he got in; and then he called us all sort o' *blasphemious* names, and said as how he'd punch our heads to jelly; and then he's kept all these people as see his *houtrageus* proceedings, from going about their lawful business; so, you see, your honour, this would all come to a pretty considerable sum, if so be he was to be

took'd before a magistrate, as he ought to be,—only that your honour seems to be a reasonable gentleman, and one as would'nt wish poor people to be abused, only because a gentleman like your honour's son chooses to get——"

"There—there—" interrupted Mr. Levison, "that's quite enough. He's not my son, but that's no matter—I don't wish to give you any further trouble about him—so just say what will satisfy you and your witnesses, and let me go to bed in quiet."

"Well, then, your honour won't think a couple of guineas too much—considering we shall have to make good the lamps," returned the watchmen; "and a shilling a piece, I suppose, will satisfy these people; and may be your honour will give 'em five shillings beside, to have a drop o' beer amongst them."

"They shall have my heart first!" roared Charles; "extortionate villains! would you impose upon my dear, patient, unsuspicious uncle?—Give me a sword and pistols, that I may exterminate them, and rid the earth of such a nest of vipers."

"Don't go for to threaten us, master," observed one of the watchmen, holding up his staff; "for if you do, I won't take no money—but have you off to the watch-house in a jiffy; and I call upon all these here honest people, as you have *mislested* by calling 'em *wipers*, to *haid* and *hassist* me in keeping the king's peace and protecting his *horficers!*"

"How much will do, my good man? how much will do?" exclaimed Miss Rachel, rushing into the midst of them, in terror at the thoughts of her nephew's being carried off by force to the watch-house. "Here—here's four guineas,

Smithson, del. Engraved by Phillibrown

"A pretty night work you have made, you ungracious rascal!" he observed to his nephew, &c.

[illegible] TALLIS & CO. NORTHAMPTON SQUARE.

now, for goodness' sake, go about your business, and clear the house of these people—you can settle with them, out of doors!"

Charles, who was now apparently only prevented from doing personal violence to the watchmen, by the efforts of the servants, who, at his uncle's commands, had laid fast hands upon him, now vociferated a whole host of maledictions and threats of vengeance upon the watchmen, who, having got hold of the money, quickly made their exit, with all their followers; but, on throwing the door wide open, to allow them to pass, Mr. Levison discovered that the house was completely surrounded with a mob, awaiting the issue of the *fracas* they had witnessed.

"A pretty night's work you have made, you ungracious rascal!" he observed to his nephew, when the door had closed on the motley group.

"Yes, and I have had a pretty day of it, too," hiccuped Charles, "and I'll tell you what, nunky—I'll have a pretty many more such pretty days and nights, too, for I will not be cooped up any longer like a chicken, but I'll do as others do, and enjoy life! I have been to Vauxhall, nunky, with——but don't tell Fanny——"

"Will you get to bed now, if you please, sir, and not disturb us any longer with your profligacy?" exclaimed Mr. Levison; "and Fanny, my dear, pray go up stairs—and you, too, Rachel, I am sure this is not a proper scene for you to be witnesses of."

"'Ah, Fanny—pretty Fanny!"' sang Charles, as she ran quickly up stairs, scarcely able to refrain from laughing, though she felt angry with her cousin, for having carried his manœuvre (as he called it) so far; for his look,

as he turned towards the stairs, and extended his arms in a theatrical attitude, confirmed her in the conviction that the whole was only a trick upon his uncle.

The plan, however, completely succeeded.—At breakfast the next morning, Charles pleaded a violent headache, as the cause of his absence, and Mr. Levison, in one of his sourest moods, announced to his sister his determination to return home, on the first day of the following week.

"So soon, brother?—you forget, we have two engagements," returned Miss Rachel; "on Tuesday we are to go to——"

"I do not care any thing about it, Rachel—I will not stay any longer than I have fixed, if we were engaged to the king himself! I am heartily sick of London, and I will get that foolish young rascal home, before he becomes confirmed in vice—I would not again go through such a scene as that of last night, if I were to gain a kingdom by it!"

Charles affected to look very downcast and penitent, when he encountered his uncle at the dinner-table. Mr. Levison, however, detected the smile, which Charles could not suppress, at hearing his uncle's announcement of his intention to leave London, without delay.

"You laugh, sir, I suppose, because you think I am not serious; but, to convince you I am, I shall insist upon your setting out to-morrow morning, with Thomas, who is going down to the Hall by the mail, in order to get ready for our reception."

Charles had some difficulty to conceal his satisfaction at this arrangement.

"You might let me remain till you go, uncle," he

observed, without raising his eyes—"I have made an engagement, that I cannot very well get out of——"

"And how dare you, sir, make engagements, without consulting me?" exclaimed Mr Levison; "what society have you, or ought you to have——"

"I am sure, uncle," returned Charles, "they are very respectable people—though I met with them by accident; and the sister is one of the most pretty, interesting girls that——"

"Fool! Puppy! how dare you form acquaintance with pretty interesting girls, and—but I'll not be disputed with—I'll have you go into the country to-morrow morning—so let me hear no more!"

"But you will allow me, uncle, at least, to go this evening, and tell them I am going out of town—and, indeed, I must go, because, if I recollect right, though my head was rather confused, I think I lent somebody two or three guineas, and I dare say they will be honourable enough to set me right about it—I know I could not have spent so much as I had in my pocket, and yet it was all gone."

Mr. Levison raised his hands and eyes in astonishment. "Pretty company, indeed!" he exclaimed; "honourable? Yes, I dare say they will be honourable enough to rob you again, and perhaps murder you, if they get you into their haunts. I only wonder you got home safe at all; pray, had you your watch with you?"

"Yes, uncle, but I took care to hide it."

"Oh, then, it seems you *were* doubtful of your associates! Well, thank goodness, it will be the last time, I'll take care, that you shall run yourself into such dangers—at least while you are under my jurisdiction. You must do as you please, when you get out of it—and so I beg I

may have no more of your foolery, but get yourself ready to set off, as I told you before."

"Have I not succeeded capitally, cousin?" said Charles, when Fanny and he were left together. "I hope you will never laugh at my plots again."

"It was rather an expensive one, Charles," returned Fanny, smiling.

"Why, yes—it certainly cost the old gentleman something—but that was owing to the rogues of watchmen. I had no suspicion the fellows would have been so exorbitant, as they had no trouble, and I had previously explained to them that it was only a joke, that I wanted to play upon my uncle."

"Then you were not, in reality, intoxicated," said Fanny, "and, I suppose, the rest of the story was all feigned?"

"Exactly so," returned Charles, with an air of exultation. "I dined very comfortably and quietly at a coffee-house, went afterwards quietly and comfortably to Vauxhall, and came home soberly and orderly, till I got to the corner of this street, where I concerted my plan with the watchmen, who were ready enough to fall into it, and seemed cordially to join in the fun of frightening the old country gentleman."

"And duping the young one," said Fanny, smiling. "However, I acknowledge, Charles, that you have perfectly succeeded in your object, and that, I suppose, is praise sufficient to satisfy even your vanity; but now, how do you mean to proceed? I am very fearful that your rashness——"

"My rashness! come, that is a good one!" replied Charles, "as if you ever knew me do any thing,

without coolly calculating the consequences. If I was as romantic, indeed, or as violently in love as some people I know, there might be reason to fear my acting rashly. By the by, Fanny, I shall be off before we can possibly expect a letter from Denzil—do not let my uncle get hold of it, on any account—for I know he would not be at all scrupulous as to opening it, and there may be something in it, that I should not wish him to see."

"But how am I to prevent it?" returned Fanny.

"Oh, I will take care to give James instructions to look out for it, and give it to you, and you had better open it as soon as you get it, because there may be something in it that will require an immediate answer."

"But I could not answer it," returned Fanny, hastily.

"And why not?" demanded Charles; "but, however, I do not want you to do any thing you do not approve of—but you will not, I suppose, object to read the letter—especially when I tell you that I know beforehand it will be written purposely for your perusal."

"For my perusal?" returned Fanny, in surprise; "I cannot understand you."

"Read the letter—read the letter, as soon as you get it, and that will explain all," returned Charles, with an air of self-confidence; "and all that has puzzled you in Denzil's conduct will, I have no doubt, be explained to your satisfaction."

Fanny shook her head mournfully—"I doubt it very much," she observed; "but, however, if you conceive that it is proper I should open the letter, I will do so."

"Certainly, and if there is any thing that it is necessary I should know immediately, you can write to me, if, as I

suspect, my uncle should shew an inclination to remain longer in town than he now talks about."

"I hope he will not, I am sure," returned Fanny, sighing, "for I am heartily sick of London, and all belonging to it."

"Why, yes, I must say, our visit to London has not turned out quite what we expected," returned Charles; "but keep up your spirits, Fanny—all will end happily yet!"

CHAPTER VIII.

> Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not,
> Love may sink by slow decay,
> But by sudden wrench, believe not
> Hearts can thus be torn away.—BYRON.

MR. LEVISON's anxiety and watchfulness, till the hour arrived for his nephew's departure, was a source of abundant merriment to the latter, who mischievously contrived to heighten it, by affecting the greatest reluctance to go.

Fanny's gravity, too, little as she felt inclined to mirth, was put severely to the test, when her father observed to her, that, as he had a suspicion that Charles would try to give Thomas the slip, he should himself go with them, and see them safe off by the mail; but she was obliged most seriously to remonstrate with her cousin, to keep him from carrying the joke farther.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the old gentleman, when he returned, "I have seen the ungracious profligate safe

off—and I will take care, when he again gets into a scrape, it shall be his own fault, and not mine—for never, while he is under my control, shall he again set his foot into London."

In a few days after the departure of her cousin, the servant, whom Charles had spoken to on the subject, put a letter into Fanny's hand, which she immediately recognised as being in the hand-writing of Denzil. A thousand tumultuous thoughts rushed into her mind as she gazed upon the well-known writing, which Charles had declared would at once satisfy all her doubts and fears. She longed, yet dreaded to open it. Should Charles have deceived her, and should the letter not be intended for her sight—would she not bitterly repent having opened it, and would not Denzil have reason to condemn her indiscreet curiosity?

Twenty times was she on the point of breaking the seal, and then, as if restrained by some secret power, she again laid the letter down, to reflect on what she was about to do. The consideration that Charles would, perhaps, blame her, should it contain any thing that required an immediate reply, at length determined her. The seal was broken, and, with a palpitating and agonised heart, after a few introductory sentences, she read as follows—

"You require of me, Charles, to answer clearly, and without evasion, the questions which you say your regard for me and your cousin has induced you to put. They are soon—I was going to say *easily* answered—but the agony that wrings my very heart-strings while I write this, contradicts the assertion that it is *easy* to answer them. I will, however, difficult as it is, imitate your plain-dealing, and assure you that I have no intentions

nor wishes towards your cousin, but such as a brother would feel towards a beloved sister. You ask me, if a mistaken principle of gratitude and generosity towards your uncle, ought to induce me to render his daughter miserable? I earnestly hope that Fanny's happiness or misery can be but little influenced by me—but I do most solemnly assure you that no such motives as you assign have influenced me. It was not at your uncle's wish, but my own earnest request, that I quitted England—probably, never to return; at least, I fear the time when I can return with satisfaction to myself, is far, very far distant. You ask me if there is any bar, unconnected with your uncle's disapproval of the attachment, which you declare still exists in my heart towards your cousin? Unequivocally, and without reserve I reply—that there does exist a bar, which no human power can remove—a bar, which I cannot, without incurring the heaviest guilt, even *wish* removed—and now let me turn from this painful subject, to what you say of your own feelings and interests.

"You are determined, you observe, let my answer be what it will, that you will not comply with your uncle's wish of uniting you to your cousin. I can scarcely believe that you could seriously reject so precious a gift! You tell me that you are certain her heart is given to me—Heaven forbid! miserable, indeed, should I be, if I thought—— but I dare not dwell on that idea—I dare not let my thoughts wander to that theme. To return to yourself:—let me entreat you, Charles, not to reject the happiness which is in your power! Where can you find one so qualified to secure you the most perfect felicity this world can afford, as Fanny Levison? Mad, worse than

mad, you must be, should you throw away such an inestimable jewel as her love.

"With regard to her being, as you say, as determinately bent as yourself to defeat the wishes of her father, I can only say I do not believe it, Charles. I know, too well, every feeling of her pure, innocent heart, to believe that she would wilfully resolve to render her father unhappy, by refusing to comply with his wishes, when she must know they are solely directed to her happiness; or that she would sully her own dignity, by continuing to nourish a passion for one who—who, at least, avows that he never can—that he never dare wish to be aught to her but that which he now is—a warm, devoted friend; a brother in love, if not in name. But I leave to Mr. Levison the task of reconciling Fanny, should she need any persuasion to induce her to dismiss from her mind all recollection of those hopes which I acknowledge I once ventured, as well as her, to cherish——"

"He need not fear!" exclaimed Fanny, dashing down the letter, with proud contempt. "Oh no, he need not fear that the despised, scorned, rejected being, whose happiness he affects to be so careful of, will need any more powerful arguments than his own conduct furnishes, to induce her to forget that she has ever regarded him in a different light. It is a poor, a paltry evasion!" she continued, recurring again to his assertion that there existed a bar to their union. "What bar can there be, but such as his own false heart has forged? And yet he has ever been the most honourable, the most candid being that ever bore the name of man! Can he, then, so utterly have changed his character?—can he so totally have forsaken his principles, as deliberately to frame a

tale of falsehood! Oh, no, there *is* some mystery—some dreadful secret—and my father is acquainted with it! He is satisfied of its veracity, and he has sanctioned, if not advised Denzil to leave England—to become an exile, perhaps, as he says, for ever!"

Again and again she read the letter, which contained little more than that which has been already given, except that at the conclusion Denzil observed, that, though he sat down with a determination to comply with Charles's wish, that he should write such a letter as might be shown to Fanny, he felt that he had not succeeded, and therefore must leave it to him (Charles) to explain, in the best manner he could, all that he wished to explain. But, though Fanny read, and re-read the fatal mandate, which sealed the separation of her and Denzil for ever, in vain did she try to fathom the mystery which enveloped his conduct and declarations. What could be the nature of the bar which he declared no human power could remove? At length, a ray of light, as she believed, broke in upon her—"He is married!" she exclaimed; "in some moment of folly or madness, he has contracted an indissoluble engagement, which he now bitterly repents, and which renders it guilt, even to think of me—or I to think of him," she added, after a few moments' pause, during which a thousand corroborating circumstances seemed to rush at once into her mind. "Yes," she continued, "I must indeed learn to consider him only as a friend, as a brother—but why did he not avow the truth, at once?—why leave me to suspense and painful conjecture?—alas, it is some connexion too disgraceful to avow—one that will probably entail misery and disgrace upon him, should it be known."

It was in vain, however, that Fanny, though firmly convinced that she had discovered the true solution of the mystery, endeavoured to recal to her recollection any circumstance which could fix the fact to any precise period of time, or enable her to identify the female who had thus, as she believed, stepped in between her, and her happiness.

Had it been her cousin Charles, who had acted so, she would not have been surprised; for his gallantries among the girls of the village adjacent to Levison Hall, had more than once exposed him to censure and reproof from his uncle. But on this head, Denzil had always acted the part of a monitor to his thoughtless companion, and often—very often, had Mr. Levison held up his (Denzil's) conduct as a model for imitation to his nephew.

"Look at Denzil," he would say, "who can be gayer than he is?—who can enjoy himself, or promote mirth better among the young folks than he can?—who is more admired than he is?—You know well, half the girls are in love with him—and yet he never acts so as to raise a blush on their cheeks, or have cause for one on his own! while you——but I am ashamed to draw a parallel between you!"

"And can it then be possible," thought Fanny, "that Denzil could suffer these praises to be bestowed on him, while he was secretly harbouring a disgraceful attachment —secret, indeed, it must have been—and artfully must it have been conducted—to have escaped even the prying curiosity, which forms so prominent a feature in Charles's character! Not even the slightest trace, however, it is plain, has ever come to his knowledge—for no considera-

tion on earth, I know, would have kept him from blazoning forth that which he would have considered a complete triumph, and a vindication of his own misdoings."

It was in vain, however, that Fanny tried to argue against the probability that Denzil had so entangled himself—the glaring fact that he avowed that an impediment existed to their union, which no human power could remove, stared her in the face, and it would admit of no interpretation but that she had given to it!

A summons to breakfast interrupted her meditations.

Agitated as she was, and unfit to bear the inquiries which she knew would be made the moment she appeared, she was still too anxious to learn whether there was any thing in Denzil's letter to her father, which she had seen lying on the table, that could throw any light upon the subject which perplexed her, to frame any pretext for refusing to attend the breakfast-table.

"What is the matter, my dear?" demanded her aunt, the moment she entered the room.

"I am not very well," returned Fanny, hastening to take her seat, without daring to look towards her father, after the first glance, which disclosed to her that he was busily engaged over Denzil's letter.

Rachel's looks betrayed her concern and curiosity at her niece's appearance, for though Fanny had never looked well after Denzil's departure, the alteration had never been so striking as at the present moment. She saw, however, that Fanny was desirous of escaping notice, and she refrained from making any farther inquiry, resolving, however, not to let her niece evade her anxiety, when they should be left alone with each other.

"Ill! she does look ill," exclaimed Mr. Levison, when he had concluded the perusal of his letter; "but I do not wonder at it, for she, and all of us, have had much vexation lately. Here is a letter from Denzil, I am sure, would vex a saint—he spurns at all my cautions respecting these Delaneys, who appear to have completely fascinated him! I should not wonder if the next thing we hear is, that he is married to one of these Irish Hebes."

Fanny involuntarily started! It was not that such an idea might not have occurred to herself, had she considered Denzil at liberty to form such an engagement; but she had persuaded herself that Denzil was already married, and believed, too, that her father was fully acquainted with the important fact. His manner, however, instantaneously convinced her that she had misjudged on this point, and thus the whole train of reasoning by which she had convinced herself that such was the case, fell to the ground at once.

"It would not in the least surprise me," continued Mr. Levison, without appearing to notice her agitation, "if the very next packet brings me a formal requisition from the papa, to allow my ward's addresses to his daughter—or, perhaps, it will be more convenient to them, and prevent all unpleasant inquiries, to knock up the match first, and then send to me for my consent."

"I do not see why you should withhold it, brother," observed Miss Rachel, "if satisfactory proof is given that the family are such as he represents them to be."

"*You* do not see!" returned Mr. Levison, in that peculiarly quiet and significant tone which he always

assumed, when he wished to mark strongly his contempt of his sister's arguments or understanding.

"But you surely would not refuse from mere national prejudice, papa?" said Fanny, exerting herself to speak with calmness and apparent indifference, yet secretly anxious to draw from her father some conclusive observation.

"No, my dear," he replied, with mildness, "certainly not—but at present I should object to Denzil's marrying at all—because I should consider he would do so under mistaken views and ideas."

Fanny became still more anxious.

"But, papa, suppose this young lady to be all he represents her—would it not be wrong——"

"He represents!—this young lady!" repeated Mr. Levison, "what are you running your head against, child—Denzil has not mentioned any young lady particularly, or given any hint of any predilection for one more than the other of the family; but I was speaking of what may probably happen, in the common course of events."

"There, brother," exclaimed Miss Rachel, "that is *you*, who are always accusing *me* of making matches for people, and foreseeing events which are not likely ever to come to pass!—I dare say the poor boy has never even dreamt of the match you have been making for him!"

"That is no reason it should not take place!" said Mr. Levison; "his total unconsciousness that such a scheme is contemplated, is the very reason why he may be more easily taken in. That there is some such idea, I have not the smallest doubt—for nothing else can account for the extraordinary *motherliness* of the mother towards

him, which he, like a foolish lad, thinks is the effect of his own merit, and her amiability."

Fanny was now farther off than ever from the object of her solicitude—namely, the discovery of Denzil's real situation, and the development of that mystery which he had thrown over it.

The conversation dropped, for some casual allusion to Charles Levison brought him forward on the tapis, and Mr. Levison could think or talk of nothing else but his nephew, for the remainder of the breakfast time.

At any other time, Fanny would have smiled at the pains her uncle took to prove that the affair which he had at the time thought so serious, and which had occasioned her cousin's sudden banishment into the country, was a mere bagatelle—the natural consequence of youth and high spirits— a frolic such as he himself had a hundred times engaged in; but she was now too seriously depressed, and her mind too anxiously engaged, to bestow even a moment's thought on the subject; and it was not until her father uttered the following pointed remark, that she felt roused into any interest.

"I have always said" he observed, "that Charles Levison's errors, however numerous, would never be such as to influence his future happiness; while Denzil Montgomery's, if he ever committed any, would be such as would bring serious distress upon him."

"And what, then, has Denzil done, dear papa, to prove that you were right?" she demanded, in faltering accents.

Mr. Levison looked for a moment embarrassed by the question, but he quickly recovered himself—"He has not yet done anything my dear, that I know of," he

replied, "but I was alluding to the probability of his forming a clandestine attachment, which can never lead to anything but unhappiness. I never knew one yet," he added, emphatically, "that did not terminate in the distress of the parties—for the very circumstance of their acting in defiance of the will of their parents, and superiors in knowledge, proves the party to be rash, self-willed, and presumptuous—qualities which are not very likely to ensure happiness in the marriage state, even where real love exists; but in more than one half of the cases of clandestine marriage, the parties know nothing about true affection, but are led away by some very different feeling—some *ignis-fatuus*, which leads them on for a while with high-raised hopes, only to plunge them the deeper into the slough of despair."

"And is Denzil, do you think, likely to be so beguiled?" said Fanny, scarcely conscious what she uttered, but anxious to prolong the conversation.

"No—oh no—I hope not," returned her father; "but what I meant to say was, that I am far less certain of his not acting so imprudently, than I am of Charles, who never lets his sensibility get the better of his prudence."

"How little does he suspect," thought Fanny, "that this boasted prudential nephew is at this very moment plotting a clandestine alliance, which will at once overturn all his systems—while Denzil, whom he thus tacitly condemns, would, I know, shrink from committing any action that could seem like ingratitude or disrespect to his benefactor. And would he not condemn me, too, if he knew that I suffered myself to become the confidant of the intention of Charles—nay, in some respects, the abettor of them?"

The thought that she should incur the censure of him to whom she had ever looked up with fond reliance, as her monitor and her guide, added bitterness to her feelings; and she could scarcely restrain the tears that swelled into her eyes, as her father (as if to make amends for his indirect censure of Denzil) began to praise him for every imaginable good quality, save that of prudence.

"If by prudence you mean selfishness, Denzil has certainly none, or at least as little as falls to the lot of any human being," she replied, "while Charles, on the contrary, always means to take care of himself, though he sometimes mistakes the means of so doing."

Mr. Levison did not look very well pleased at the distinction she had drawn between his two wards, but he did not attempt to controvert her, and in a few moments he retired, according to custom, to his library.

"And now, dear Fanny," said Miss Rachel, fixing her eyes with earnest affection on the pale face of her niece, "now that your father is gone, pray tell me what has happened, to make you look so unhappy and ill, when you came in? You do look a little better now, but still I can see something unusual has disturbed you—now do, there's a dear, trust your aunt, who, you know, would do anything in the world for you, for I am quite miserable and unhappy to see you thus."

Fanny's heart was quite subdued by the affectionate tone in which her aunt spoke—bursting into tears, she threw herself on her neck, and, in almost inarticulate terms, exclaimed——

"I am, indeed, unhappy—very unhappy—and I have no hope of ever being otherwise."

By degrees, Rachel drew from her the whole of her secret source of uneasiness. At the disclosure, poor Miss Rachel was astonished. Confining herself totally to her superintendence of domestic affairs, and satisfied that, as long as the family looked well and did not complain, every thing was going right, she had been totally blind to all that had been passing before her eyes; and, though she knew that Denzil's departure had been a source of grief and vexation to her niece, she had no suspicion how far—how deeply their interests and feelings were entwined. But still less had she any suspicion of the cause of Denzil's departure, or that any mystery existed respecting him.

"It cannot be, my dear child, it is impossible!" she exclaimed, when Fanny repeated to her the conjectures she had formed, as to Denzil's being married. "How could he have carried on an acquaintance with any one, without my finding it out? Recollect, when Charles was stealing out to meet that bold creature, Patty Stevens, and thought himself so secret and secure, how soon I found him out? Besides other things that I could mention, but which there is no need to speak of now."

"Certainly not," said Fanny, who was growing impatient at her aunt's prolixity.

"Well, then, my dear, do you not see the utter impossibility that Denzil could have gone so far as to get married, and neither me nor a soul beside suspecting that he had even a favourite—though we know very well that there were plenty laying out their snares for him, and would have been very glad to have caught him in their nets—I am sure I don't know what has come to the girls in these days; for, instead of——"

"But, dear aunt, how else can you account for what he says?" interrupted Fanny.

"I cannot account for it at all, my dear," replied her aunt, with a solemn look, "but, I'll tell you what I'll do, if you like—I will tell your father candidly the whole affair, and tell him, too, how uneasy and unhappy you are about it—and then, perhaps, he will explain it all."

Fanny shook her head despairingly——"That will never do, aunt," she replied, "my father, you must know, is opposed to my entertaining any idea of——"

"Let me alone to manage it," returned Rachel, "only try and keep up your spirits, for it breaks my heart to see you in this manner; but I will not rest, till I learn whether my brother is or is not acquainted with this mystery, if there is any."

"But, dear aunt, if you should drop a hint that I am concerned in——"

"I will not, my dear—leave it to me, and I will contrive to learn all that we want to know, without your father's suspecting that you have any interest in it."

Fanny had but a poor opinion of her aunt's talents for management, in an *affaire de cœur*; but she saw no other probable method of satisfying her anxiety, and she was, therefore, compelled to resign it into her hands.

Aunt Rachel was not of a disposition to let any business sleep on her hands, even had she not been hourly reminded of it by her neice's pale face and ill-suppressed anxiety. On the very evening, therefore, of the day in which the above conversation took place, she commenced her attack upon her brother.

Fanny had retired early, having given the convenient name of "a cold" to her very evident indisposition; and

Mr. Levison, thus deprived of his customary society, was more than usually testy and captious.

Rachel, however, was not in the mood to be foiled even by the apprehension of exciting his anger, and after two or three ineffectual attempts to persuade him to engage in a game of cards or backgammon, she observed,

"How strangely our family are all altered for the worse, within a few short weeks!"

Mr. Levison uttered some unintelligible sound, which his sister pretended to take for assent to her observation, and she continued——

"It seems as if some spell was set upon us all!—there's Fanny—never well, never in spirits, as she used to be—Charles, tormenting us so that we are glad to get rid of him,—and Denzil, who used to be the life and soul of every thing, I suppose we shall never see again, poor fellow!"

"Why should you suppose any such nonsense?" returned Mr. Levison.

"Why?" repeated Rachel, "why, because unless the cause of his absence be removed,—which I suppose is not very likely—I do not think he will ever consent to return to England."

"And what, then, does your wisdom suppose has occasioned him to leave England?" demanded Mr. Levison.

"Why, brother, I do not *suppose*, because I *know* that it was the impossibility of his marrying Fanny."

"Did he say so? did he make you his confidant?" demanded Mr. Levison, with angry surprise.

"No, certainly not—I knew he was attached to her, but it never struck me, until lately, that he was so deeply in love with her; and when I did at last see it, though

I knew it was contrary to your plans and wishes, yet I never had a thought that there was any other impediment in the way."

"And what other impediment is there then?" demanded Mr. Levison.

"Nay, brother, I never pried so closely into Denzil's secrets, as to find out what it was—but I know there is a mysterious affair, which has driven him abroad——"

"This is all of a piece!" murmured Mr. Levison to himself; "this is just in the same style as his letter; but what it means, or what the foolish lad has taken in his head, I cannot for my life divine!"

"And is it possible, then, brother, that you are not in the secret?" said Rachel, looking incredulously at him.

"It is not only possible, but absolutely true," replied Mr. Levison; "nor can I guess what he alludes to, when he talks of the horrible guilt that he has so narrowly escaped, and from which he can, even now, scarcely feel himself free. If, indeed, Fanny were actually married, he might——but the boy's brain is turned! He cannot be in his right senses! for he writes to me as if I were acquainted with some secret cause for his remorse and regret—now, though I certainly do not think—*did* not think it proper to encourage his attachment to my daughter, yet I could see no *crime* in his loving her. On the contrary, it was a natural consequence, which I ought to have foreseen, and have guarded against, and if any one ought to feel remorse, it should be me, because of my foolish blindness and negligence, in not having earlier seen and prevented the mischief."

Miss Rachel's hopes of penetrating the mystery, and thus at once satisfying her own curiosity, and removing the

suspense and anxiety of her niece, were now completely baffled, while a new cause for anxiety arose from the hint which her brother had thrown out, and which circumstances but too much confirmed, namely, that Denzil's mind was actually deranged.

"This comes of crossing affection," she murmured; "and, after all, for what? The indulgence of a whim—and for that whim three persons are to be rendered miserable, and one of them driven out of his senses!"

"You are enough to drive *me* out of my senses!" returned Mr. Levison; "who has told you that three were to be miserable? Do you not think that Fanny and Charles have sufficient love for each other, to be happy together?"

"No, brother," replied Miss Rachel, delighted at this unusual appeal to her judgment and opinion. "I am convinced that Fanny will never love any one but Denzil; and as to Charles, I can assure you that he is not at all disposed to regard his cousin in the light you wish him. ——You may probably, by your influence and authority, unite their hands, but you will never unite their hearts; and you have had, I should think, too striking an instance, in the case of our poor brother Alfred, of the MISERIES OF ENFORCED MARRIAGE, to wish to try another experiment in the family."

Mr. Levison uttered an angry "Pshaw!" but he attempted neither to combat her observations or defend his own conduct, and after sitting some time in deep thought, he abruptly bade her good night, and retired to his own room.

Fanny was awake, and anxiously expecting her aunt, when the latter stole softly to her bed-side; but the communication Rachel had to make, was but little satis-

faction to the expectant girl, who saw, in this disavowal of her father's participation in the secret, only a confirmation of her suspicion that Denzil was already married; and, after again canvassing the subject, till every argument *pro* and *con* had been repeated a dozen times at least, the aunt and niece separated for the night—the former to devise schemes for the discovery of Denzil's secret, if there were any secret, and the latter to weep over the destruction of her hopes.

CHAPTER IX.

> "What is that smile, whose rapturous glow
> Passion's impetuous breath inspires,
> Whilst Pleasure's gaudy blossoms blow,
> And the eye beams with guilty fires?
> 'Tis the volcano's baleful blaze,
> That pours around a fatal light;
> Whose victim dies that stops to gaze;
> Whence safety is but found in flight."

Denzil Montgomery had, in his first letter to Mr. Levison, introduced the family of the Delaneys to his notice; but in so doing he had omitted some circumstances connected with his own introduction to them, because he feared to awaken the ready suspicions and incur the reproofs of his guardian, for an act which he knew the latter, though he would probably have acted precisely in the same manner, would be inclined to reprehend as the height of folly and imprudence in another person.

The facts were these—Denzil had arrived at the inn at Dover some hours before the time appointed for the

sailing of the packet, and feeling no inclination for society, had retired to a private room, to await the signal for going on board. He was not, however, allowed to indulge his gloomy meditations uninterruptedly, for the room which had been assigned to him was only divided from another by folding doors, and in that room were assembled a party whose continual laughing, talking, singing, and even dancing, were an effectual bar to all serious thoughts.

Denzil also felt himself aukwardly situated, in being thus obliged to hear all that passed, as he soon discovered they were all members of the same family. He endeavoured, by various means, to awaken their attention to the fact of his being near them—but it was in vain. He coughed and hemmed, and walked heavily about the room, but they appeared too much engrossed by their own conversation to notice it, and he was compelled to remain an unwilling auditor.

After numerous desultory observations on the road they had travelled, the place they were then in, and the country they were going to, a sprightly female voice exclaimed——

"Oh, mamma, I do believe that beautiful, elegant, melancholy-looking young man, whom we saw alight from the mail, is going in the same packet with us—for I saw his servant and one of the sailors carrying his luggage down to the boat."

"It is very probable, my dear," replied the mother: "but of what consequence is that to us?"

"Nothing—only I should so like to know who he is—and why he looks so very melancholy?" replied the daughter.

"And you would like, too, to try to divert his melancholy, would you not, Julia?" said another voice, which Denzil concluded, from some previous observations, to be that of a brother of the young lady.

"Why, yes, if he answers to his looks, I should have no objection," replied the lively Julia; "for they are certainly most prepossessing! He is quite what Norah Butler would call 'a splendid specimen of an heroic race.'"

"That was the epithet I believe she applied to the youth, whom she afterwards had the mortification to discover in the heroic act of measuring ribbands and laces in a haberdasher's shop," observed another voice.

"Oh, yes, papa—I shall never forget how she looked, when, after I had been listening for an hour to her encomiums on the noble being who had so fascinated her, and on whom she flattered herself she had made an equal impression, we accidentally turned into a shop, and were immediately accosted by the hero of her tale, whose eyes sparkled, if not with love, at least with the hope of having secured a good customer. There she stood in the middle of the shop, with her great grey eyes wide open, just in this attitude, as if she was transformed to stone, while he, simpering and bowing, 'hoped she was quite well, et cetera, et cetera.' Poor Norah!—her looks said, as plain as looks could say, 'Avaunt, fellow! avaunt!' but as I did not want a scene, and was afraid, if she stayed much longer, 'Her lips would utter what her eyes revealed,' I hurried out of the shop, observing, that we would call again another evening."

"All this is very pretty, and you imitate Norah very well," observed the mother, when the bursts of laughter, which the young lady had occasioned, subsided; "but I

cannot help observing, Julia, how little you have profited by the lesson she received; for you know how violently you were struck with the appearance of the gentleman——"

This was too much for Denzil to bear any longer, and accordingly, without waiting to hear the conclusion of the sentence, he made a precipitate retreat from his apartment, and entered the public coffee-room below.

In a few minutes, two gentlemen, the one a tall, fiery-looking young man, the other a prepossessing elderly man, entered, and sat down in the next box.

Denzil did not, for some time, suspect that these were the father and son of that family whose conversation he had unwillingly overheard; but he soon recognised their voices, and saw, too, that they were very critically observing him, and smiling at something that had occurred.

At length the eyes of the elder one encountered those of Denzil, when the former arose, and in the most pleasing manner observed—

"Excuse me, sir—but I wish to apologise for any thing that may have occurred, not exactly pleasing to your feelings. You may be sure that we were perfectly unacquainted with your being so near a neighbour, until you left the room, and girls will chatter, without any meaning."

Denzil was for a few moments too much confused to be very coherent in his reply to this address; but Mr. Delaney possessed, in the highest degree, that happy tact of not only recommending himself, but inducing the persons he conversed with, to be on the best terms possible with themselves, and in less than half an hour Denzil was as much at his ease with him as he would have been after a month's intercourse with an ordinary acquaintance.

"I would ask you," observed Mr. Delaney, "to allow me to introduce my better-half and her girls to you at once, but they are so ashamed of what has passed, especially Julia, who is the wildest little baggage that ever existed! However, as we are to be fellow-voyagers, opportunities will be found, I trust, which will enable us to get over this little embarrassment."

Denzil did not avow what he felt—namely, that he had no wish for any further introduction to the family. Mr. Delaney was, indeed, a very pleasant companion, but there was an air of superciliousness and assumption in his son's looks and manner, that was far from pleasant, and Denzil had had too good a specimen of Miss Julia Delaney's talent for satire and ridicule, to be ambitious of being favoured with her notice.

The expected summons to go on board was at length received, but Mr. Delaney seemed determined that Denzil should not escape him.

"You can take care of the women, Maurice," he observed to his son, "I shall go on with our young friend."

They had not proceeded many steps towards the pier, before Mr. Delaney was suddenly stopped in the middle of some jocund remark by a man who familiarly tapped him on the shoulder.

"Zounds, Johnson, is it you?" exclaimed Mr. Delaney, turning pale.

"Yes, sir, it is me," returned the man, with a significant smile.

"And what is the matter now?" demanded Mr. Delaney.

"Only a trifle, sir, about forty pounds altogether, including my expenses."

"And what is to be done now, I should like to know?" replied the former: "All my trunks are on board, and I do not believe I have above ten pounds ready money in my possession, though I have got letters of credit, when I get to Paris, to any amount."

"That is no use to me, you know, Mr. Delaney—I can't go back with that story," returned the stranger.

"What shall I do?" observed Mr. Delaney, appealing to Denzil; "it will be hard to be kept from accompanying my family for such a trifle, and perhaps, subjected to the disagreeable necessity and expense of going back all the way to London, for I am sure I know not any one here who would accommodate me with such a sum, though I could repay it the moment I reached Paris."

Denzil did not wait to recal to his recollection the sundry cautions which Mr. Levison had given, always to distrust his own *travelling* countrymen, and to fly from them, as he would from a mad dog, if, under any pretence whatever, they attempted to borrow money. He forgot, too, to inquire by what strange chance an honourable man, as he supposed Mr. Delaney to be, could have given his creditors the trouble of sending a sheriff's officer from London to Dover, to enforce the payment of a demand;—he only saw Mr. Delaney embarrassed and vexed at the probability of being separated from his family, and in a few moments a fifty-pound note was drawn out of his pocket-book, and consigned, without a single remark, to the hands of his friend.

Mr. Delaney was too much a man of the world to make many words about such a trifling favour, but when, a short time after, in the cabin of the packet, he intro-

duced his *friend* Mr. Montgomery to his wife and daughters, he took care to place the obligation Denzil had conferred on him, quite in its fullest light.

"Why did you not settle with the rascal before you left London, sir?" inquired Mr. Maurice Delaney.

"Because, as you very well know, Maurice, it was an unjust demand," returned the father; "nor would I now have paid it, but for the inconvenience and uneasiness I knew such an affair would have occasioned to your mother and sisters."

The affair was dropped; but Denzil did feel a *little* surprised that, though allusions were frequently made, by all the parties, to the obligation he had conferred on them, Mr. Delaney never thought of repaying the fifty-pound note.

"What would Mr. Levison say," thought Denzil, "if I were to tell him all this?—but I will not say a word about it."

Accordingly, he did not mention a word of this transaction; but in Mr. Levison's reply he nevertheless received a quite sufficient lecture, on his want of caution in forming a connexion with strangers, to render him uneasy and thoughtful.

"It is too late now to recede," thought Denzil, after listening to Mr. Delaney's plans, by which he had settled that, for the next three months at least, he (Denzil) should form a part of their family. Yet, though he felt he was too much entangled to free himself, Denzil was by no means easy; for there were many points in the conduct of his new friends, which he could not be entirely blind to, and which he felt totally unable to approve.

Mrs. Delaney, a well-educated, mild woman, was as kind

and attentive to him as she was to her own children, and Julia and Helen, two fine-looking romping girls, without a thought beyond the enjoyment of the moment, were as free and easy with him as with their brother, while Mr. Delaney took every thing upon him with regard to travelling expenses and cares, as if he had been father to his young friend. So far all was good;—but there were various little indications, which did not escape Denzil's observant eye, that the whole family were not of so respectable a stamp as he had been accustomed to associate with.

Paltry shuffling, to avoid necessary expenses, and reckless extravagance wherever show was thought necessary —a disregard of what Denzil considered proper reserve and decorum—and great assumption of personal dignity, where it seemed to him totally unnecessary, were all so many stumbling-blocks to that perfect confidence which Denzil wished to repose in them, and which they certainly seemed to place in him.

With Mr. Maurice Delaney, Denzil could have no intimate connexion,—no fellow feeling; nor, in fact, did he entertain any feeling but the most perfect contempt and dislike. With very shallow intellects, and, considering his situation and his opportunities, very little education, Mr. Maurice Delaney possessed a very inordinate share of self-conceit, arrogance, and bigotry. To Denzil personally, indeed, he displayed none of these qualities—for he was to him deferential almost to servility; and Denzil felt but the more disgusted with him, from observing the striking contrast which Mr. Maurice displayed in his conduct towards himself, and towards others, with whom he thought he might safely take

liberties. To his sisters, his mother, and to the servants, Mr. Maurice Delaney was, in fact, a complete tyrant, and Denzil sometimes had great difficulty to restrain himself from interfering in the frequent quarrels that arose, when Mr. Delaney was not present to interpose his authority.

The girls, too, not unfrequently, though they were generally on the right side of the question, betrayed a great deal more spirit, or rather violence, in their altercations, than quite suited Denzil Montgomery's ideas of female delicacy and decorum; and though Julia Delaney could *talk* very prettily and sentimentally, could weep over her pet dove when dying, and moralize very edifyingly on a flower or a fly, there was often a degree of levity, not to say licentiousness, in her remarks, and a selfishness and parade in her actions, which Denzil could not help contrasting with the mild, unpretending—yet ever correct and ingenuous Fanny Levison.

"Fanny Levison!"—Oh, what thoughts, what recollections did that name recal to his memory!—thoughts, which made him recoil with almost loathing from the society he was now among,—which made him shrink from the covert and indirect endeavours of the insinuating Julia, and the bold and open efforts of the less wily, but not less designing Helen Delaney, to attract his admiration.

The melancholy which Denzil could never subdue, even in the most animated moments of the gay and pleasure-loving group that surrounded him, had not escaped their notice or their animadversion. It had been, as Julia with more candour than prudence had unhesitatingly avowed, the first attraction that had induced her to regard him with feelings of more than

common friendship—and even Mr. Delaney himself, though more cautious and delicate than the rest of his family, had made divers attempts to penetrate into the cause of what certainly seemed an unusual characteristic in so young a man.

Denzil's lips, however, were sealed on this subject. There existed not a living being, to whom he could have breathed the secret of his grief; but even if he could have found a mind to which he could have confided the struggle which his heart sustained, that mind would not have been found in the family of the Delaney's.

Mr. Delaney's direct questions and Mrs. Delaney's mild, maternal solicitude, exerted more indirectly, drew from him the declaration, which appeared to them perfectly satisfactory, that no pecuniary losses or embarrassments, nor any unfortunate *liaison*, occasioned his sorrow and melancholy. Denzil avowed himself rich enough to satisfy all his wants and wishes, and independent of every tie, save those of gratitude and affection to the protectors of his childhood—Mr. Levison and his sister.

"It must, then, be disappointed love," observed Mrs. Delaney to her daughter Julia, when she communicated to her the result of her investigation; "and that, at his age, and with the advantage of absence from the object——"

"And the still greater advantage of seeing, every day, those who, I dare say, need not fear competition with the favoured fair one," added Mr. Delaney, smiling on his daughters.

"Thank you, papa, 'I owe you one,' as Dr. Ollapod says, for that pretty compliment," replied Julia, drawing herself up, and surveying herself in the mirror that hung

opposite; "but I should like very much to know who or what sort of a being it is, that is honoured with so much regret—I really think she must be quite a non-pareil; for ordinary charms, and, indeed, some that are not very ordinary, seem quite incapable of exciting any thing like admiration."

"I would lay my life," said Helen, with a laugh, "that at this very moment he does not even know the difference between Julia's eyes and mine. Mamma is the only one of the family whom he seems to regard with any thing like admiration, and I have caught him several times looking very tender things at her."

"Yes, but that has only been admiration of her graceful and gentle manner of performing her maternal duties," observed Mr. Delaney; "and if you were equally cautious and discreet, in not offending his delicate notions of female propriety, it is very evident to me you would attract a much greater share of his notice than you now do."

Julia curled her pretty lip with an expression of contempt.

"How sickening!" she exclaimed; "a boy of eighteen or nineteen, setting himself up for a censor, and expecting every female to act according to the model he has fancied perfection."

"Well, well, I am not going to argue whether he is right or wrong; and, indeed, I think myself, it is rather ridiculous and unnatural; but I only give you a gentle hint of what you should avoid, if you wish to captivate," replied Mr. Delaney; "I observed him this morning, Julia, when you called your brother an ignorant puppy, for contradicting you in some tale you were telling; and

if you could have seen the look of surprise and contempt his countenance wore, you would have seen the propriety of my advice——"

"I should have seen that he deserved to be called so, too," said Julia, contemptuously.

Denzil entered the room at this moment, and Julia, as if to prove at once her versatility and her obedience to her father's instructions, assumed a look of penitence and submission, which sat very prettily on her really interesting and handsome countenance.

"Julia has been just receiving a lecture from her mother," whispered Mr. Delaney, drawing Denzil aside. "She is a good girl, but too quick and lively in her feelings, to be always as prudent as she ought to be."

Denzil was quite disposed to agree with this latter assertion; but he was somewhat surprised at the unusual humility with which Julia appeared to have received the rebukes of her mother.

From this time Julia's manners became more guarded in the presence of Denzil, who, however, felt too little interested in the affair to remark for some time the change that had taken place for the better; and when, at length, his attention was drawn to it by the gentle hints of Mrs. Delaney, he was certainly far from attributing it to the true cause—a desire of appearing amiable in his eyes.

The acuteness of Ned, Denzil's servant, however, revealed the secret, and in some measure opened his master's eyes to the ultimate designs of the Delaney family.

"Well, Ned," observed the latter, a few weeks after his arrival in Paris, "are you better reconciled to France and French people, than you were? or do the thoughts of

Cumberland and Dolly Simpson still make you sigh for home?"

"I wou'dna care if I were gaen home to-morrow, or to-night, before to-morrow, sir," replied Ned; "as for Dolly Simpson, I'd be sorry to put her in *comparagement* with ony I've seen sin I left England."

"Yet I thought you seemed very tender with Mrs. Kitty, Mrs. Delaney's maid, to-day, when I met you," observed Denzil, smiling.

"I woudna' ha' Mrs. Kitty, if she'd a hunder pound for her portion," returned Ned. "I like neither maid nor mistresses, though I know they all make themselves sure."

"Sure of what?" demanded Denzil.

"Why, sure o' catching the man, as well as the master," replied Ned, bluntly.

"Catching," repeated Denzil, blushing, "I do not believe such a thought ever came into their minds; and if it had, I am sure they are quite mistaken."

"I hope so," said Ned, with his usual frankness; "but I know Mrs. Kitty thinks your marriage with Miss Julia as good as settled, and other things she fancies will follow of course."

"Are you sure of what you are saying, Ned?" demanded Denzil, "or—but why should I concern myself with what Mrs. Kitty may think, or choose to say—her mistresses, I am sure, would be very angry, if they knew she took so much liberty as to——"

"Indeed, sir, you are quite mistaken," said Ned; "I don't know, to be sure, that they would like her to say quite so much to me as she does—but I do know that it is regularly talked about as certain that you are to

be Miss Julia's husband—and I know, too, that she's frightened to death of your seeing her in any of her tantrums, for fear it should spoil the match. It was only yesterday that she gave Mrs. Kitty a handsome new cap, because she was afraid that it might come to your ears that she had torn the wench's cap and half her hair off her head, in one of her passions, and then went smiling and simpering into the drawing-room, as if nothing particular had happened.

Denzil smiled contemptuously.

"A pretty prospect truly, for a husband," he observed; "but make your mind easy, Ned—I have never, for one moment, harboured such an idea as choosing a wife from this family—and I shall now, you may be sure, take the first opportunity of letting them know my sentiments."

"Aye, but they are so artful, your honour, that I am afraid——"

"Psha! they cannot *force* me into a marriage," interrupted Denzil, "and I defy their utmost efforts to *induce* me to fall in love with either of the daughters,—especially," he added, smiling, "since you have told me how dangerous they are."

"I haven't told your honour half," returned Ned, eagerly; "I only wish you could hear Mrs. Kitty's stories of the treatment she has put up with from them, at different times."

"I have heard quite enough to put me on my guard, Ned, even if there was any necessity for it," replied his master; "but, before many weeks are passed, I shall be far away from the Delaneys altogether."

Ned's countenance brightened—"I don't care how soon," he observed; "but I can't help thinking what a

tidy disturbance there will be, when they find that all their fine plans are come to *nowt!* I told Mrs. Kitty as how they had got the wrong pig by the ear, if they tho't to make a fool of your honour; but though she'll talk of 'em, and abuse 'em hersel, she won't let nobody else say a word against 'em; and so she and I quarrelled, because she would uphold that, with all her faults, Miss Julia Delaney was too good a match for an Englishman and a heretic!"

Lightly as Denzil had treated the information his servant had given him, he felt no inconsiderable share of embarrassment, as to the means he should adopt to break off a connexion, which he felt was becoming every hour more irksome and more difficult to get rid of. He was conscious, indeed, that, though the efforts of the young ladies to ensnare his affections had failed, Mr. Delaney had acquired a power over him, which, though his reason revolted at, he in vain endeavoured to shake off.

It was not that he considered this gentleman as wholly exempt from the faults which were so glaringly prominent in the other members of the family; on the contrary, Denzil had frequent occasion to mark the most striking proofs of the same laxity of principle and levity of manners, that disgusted him in the younger branches of the family; but Mr. Delaney possessed infinitely more sense, knowledge of the world, and shrewd penetration into character, than either his son or his daughters; and he never said or did any thing revolting to Denzil's feelings, without contriving, soon after, to make the *amende honorable*, either by candidly avowing his error, and attributing it to the bad and corrupting influence of indiscriminate and ill-chosen society, or by directly doing or saying

boon—but I have told you how I am circumstanced. Elinor is seriously ill—I cannot leave her—and therefore——"

"I have not got so much about me," said Mr. Delaney, interrupting him; "however, here is all I have got—and, if you will call to-morrow at the Hotel d' Angleterre, I will make it up to the sum you require; but it must really be the last—unless I succeed in the scheme I mentioned, and then perhaps I shall be able to assist you."

"I shall be beyond the reach of your assistance before that time," returned the stranger. "If Elinor recovers, we shall quit Paris in a few days."

"The sooner the better," said Mr. Delaney, drily; "there are, unfortunately, a great many here to whom both you and I are known—and, should the unfortunate circumstances of your history be remembered, and again brought forward, they might reach the ears of one whom I should wish to remain in ignorance, at least for the present, that I have the honour to have a near relation, who——"

"You may spare your sneers, Delaney," interrupted the stranger, angrily; "were I inclined to recriminate, I might, perhaps, recal to your recollection——"

"You had better refrain," said Mr. Delaney, "from making any observations on my conduct and character, and endeavour to improve your own, by seeking some place where you might remain in secret. Indeed, I cannot think what is the reason you cannot stop in one country, but must be everlastingly wandering about!" continued Mr. Delaney, in an angry tone. "I don't want to know how you get your living—for, perhaps, it would be only adding to

the vexation and mortification which I always feel, when I recal the excellent opportunities you have lost, through your own folly."

"It is false!" replied the stranger, with vehemence. "I may have been rash—I may have miscalculated my resources—but I have been the victim of fatality—my views have been foiled, my expectations frustrated, by the fate which——"

"Psha, that is all stuff!" interrupted Mr. Delaney; "if a man prospers, he imputes it to his own merit or sagacity, but if he fails, it is attributed to fate. I could name two or three instances, I have known, in your life—but I do not see any reason why I should concern myself at all about it—I have told you I can do nothing beyond temporary assistance; and, by the by, I cannot see what occasion you have to burthen yourself with Elinor—why does she not force her husband to allow her a maintenance?"

"It is very easy to talk," replied the stranger, "but we will let that matter rest. You acknowledge that you do not wish to interfere at all in my affairs, and I have as little inclination to enter into details, as you have to hear them. If you will lend me the sum I mentioned, I shall repay it, whenever I have power and opportunity. I did think, when I discovered that you were here, which was by accidentally meeting one who formerly knew both you and me——"

"Who was that?" exclaimed Mr. Delaney, in a tone of alarm, "you have not, I hope——"

"Oh, you need not alarm yourself," interrupted the stranger; "the person I allude to, is one who has neither power or inclination to do you any harm, and only

mentioned your being here to me, under the idea that it might be of service to me."

Mr. Delaney made no immediate reply to this, and when he again spoke, it was in too low a tone for Denzil to comprehend what he said. He however distinctly heard the stranger reply, in a resentful tone.

"Give it me to-night, then, and that will prevent the necessity of my calling! As to my sister or her daughters, I know too well what they are, to humble myself by any application to them; though, if they possessed common humanity, they might, without at all compromising their dignity, call and see Elinor, as a poor countrywoman in distress; but I don't ask it—I know it is too much to expect, of those who seem to——"

"Oh, it's all nonsense—you can't expect it," interrupted Mr. Delaney. "Consider the consequences to them, should it be discovered that they are so nearly connected with one——"

"With one what—what were you going to say, Delaney?" exclaimed the stranger fiercely, "but no matter —I have been galled too deep within already: to feel this very keenly; though you are the last person in the world who ought to say a word respecting either me or my daughter Elinor; for, let her now be what she may, she would have been incapable, had she been placed in their situation, of acting towards your wife and daughter, as they have acted towards her—but it's of no use to prolong this conversation, which is only irritating us both unnecessarily—will you give me the money now?"

"I will see if I can borrow it of my friend—if he is not gone," said Delaney, turning round to look for

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, advancing with evident confusion to where the latter was seated, "I thought you had walked on—I had not an idea you were so near me."

"Indeed!" returned Denzil, coldly. "I imagined you saw me sit down to wait for you."

Mr. Delaney was silent for a few moments—he seemed to be meditating how far it was likely that he had betrayed himself to Denzil, and had apparently forgotten his purpose of borrowing the money which he had promised his distressed relative. Denzil, however, reminded him of it by inquiring whether he had concluded his business; and, if so, if he intended to return home.

"Oh, *à propos*," exclaimed Delaney, starting out of his reverie, "can you lend me a louis d'or? I have left my purse at home, and have only some loose silver, and I cannot do less than give this man—a poor fellow," he added, in a lower voice, "whom I have known something of in better days."

"There is the sum you require," said Denzil, drawing out his purse; "but as he is a countryman, and in distress in a foreign land, I fear that sum will be very inadequate to his necessities. You must allow me to contribute also to relieving them—there are five louis d'ors," he added, speaking loud enough for the stranger to hear, "which I beg he will accept from me."

Mr. Delaney hesitated—but the stranger, at the sound of Denzil's voice, had approached so near, that the former could not utter the remonstrance against his generosity which he was evidently inclined to make.

Unwilling to add to the mortification of either of the parties, by remaining to witness their final parting,

Denzil walked quickly away, but he had not proceeded many yards, before he was overtaken by the stranger.

"I am not—I cannot be mistaken——" exclaimed the latter; "this is not the first time we have met—and my seeing you here, convinces me you have given due credit to the warning you received! Let it be a source of satisfaction to you to know, that the boon you so liberally bestowed just now——"

Mr. Delaney at this moment approached them, and the stranger suddenly paused—but Denzil had already discovered that in the person before him he beheld the man who had, by his mysterious warnings, destroyed his happiness, and exiled him from his home.

At sight of Mr. Delaney, who with breathless speed had followed him, the stranger suddenly darted away through the trees. Denzil would have rushed after him, but Delaney forcibly withheld him.

"What are you about to do, Montgomery?" he exclaimed; "you would not surely follow that wretched being to his abode of infamy and crime? The attempt might prove your destruction! But what has he said to you, or how has he contrived, in so short a period, to awaken an interest——"

"I have seen him before," returned Denzil, in violent agitation. "Why did you prevent my following him? I would have insisted on his explaining the mystery which torments—disturbs me——"

"Mystery! ha! ha! ha!" interrupted Mr. Delaney, forcing a laugh, "he has been at his old tricks, then, I see—coining a mysterious story, to impose upon you! My dear fellow, do not suffer your credulity to be worked upon by his pretences. It is his trade—his profession—

to take advantage of the weak and the unwary; and he has a daughter, whom he has educated in the same delightful art! Sometimes they wander about together, in the garb and adopting all the habits of gipsies, and contenting themselves with the usual gains and perquisites of that respectable tribe; and, at others, they fly at higher game—contriving to make themselves acquainted with some circumstances connected with the private history of families, and then, pretending to a supernatural knowledge, not only of the past but the future, they levy considerable contributions on those who are weak enough to believe them."

"That has not been my case," returned Denzil; "they have never attempted to take advantage of my credulity —and all that they have told me, has, indeed, proved too correct. Would that you had not prevented my following him, I should then have forced from him a secret which I would give the world to know, and which I am convinced it is in his power——"

He paused suddenly, for he felt that he was betraying more than he wished to Mr. Delaney, in whom he was now more unwilling than he had been heretofore, to place confidence on the subject that agitated him.

"Probably, it may be in my power to assist you—if I were fully convinced that no imposition has been practised, or intended to be practised upon you," observed Mr. Delaney.

Denzil hesitated.

"If you could procure me an interview with that man, you would confer an everlasting obligation on me," he replied, "for, be assured, it is no feigned tale that I wish to interrogate him upon. That man, be he who or what

he may, has blighted all my hopes of happiness, by disclosing to me a secret of which I had not the slightest suspicion until I met him; but which has been since too amply confirmed, to leave a doubt of its truth. It is not probable that he could be in possession of one part of the story, without knowing all that I am so anxious to learn; and I should think no sacrifice too great, to be satisfied on one point."

Mr. Delaney shook his head. "You will not trust me, I see," he observed, "yet I would lay my life——"

"I cannot betray the secrets of others," replied Denzil, hastily; "did this only concern myself, I should not hesitate, but——"

"Pardon me, my young friend, I should be sorry to intrude myself or even my advice upon you; and if I do appear to do so now, be assured I am prompted solely by my anxiety for your welfare. I know this man well—know that he is a deep, designing, treacherous villain—though he was once a respectable member of society; but that day has long passed, and I should indeed feel much grieved, if, through my means, you should get into his power."

"You need not fear," returned Denzil. "I had been forewarned of his character long before I saw you, by one who knew him well."

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Delaney, in an embarrassed tone; "then you are probably aware that I have the misfortune to be——"

"I certainly am aware of the connexion that exists—but we will say nothing of that," returned Denzil, gravely; "it is a fortuitous circumstance which you may regret, but cannot remove."

Mr. Delaney remained silent. He was evidently suffering extreme embarrassment, and was meditating in what way he should address Denzil on the subject.

"Ah!" he at length exclaimed; "my poor Julia! her feelings would be deeply lacerated, did she know the situation of her unhappy brother. I have hitherto contrived to keep it a profound secret from her, for I am convinced she would scarcely survive the shock; and I trust, my dear sir, you will be equally cautious and prudent, in forbearing to give either her, or her daughters, a hint that you know any thing of this unfortunate relative."

"I shall certainly be as silent as you can wish, on the subject," replied Denzil, "but I hope, in return, you will use every effort to accomplish my wish; I must and will see him by some means, if he is alive, and continues in Paris twenty-four hours longer; and if he quits it, I will spare no pains or expense to trace him; for, sooner would I expend every farthing I possess in the world, than remain in uncertainty on that point which he can satisfy me upon."

"I will do my best to gratify you," replied Mr. Delaney, "but I give you notice, that, such are his erratic habits, it is probable, now he has got a supply of money, he would immediately depart for some other place."

Denzil could have contradicted this supposition, by reminding him of the dangerous illness of his daughter, which the stranger had repeatedly mentioned—but he did not think it wise to betray the extent of his knowledge, and therefore merely inquired if he (Mr. Delaney) knew by what name the unfortunate man was now known.

"I do not, indeed," replied Mr. Delaney; "but I think it highly probable that he bears his own—for there are few here, who are likely to recognise it, or even recollect the unhappy circumstances which formerly rendered it notorious."

Denzil was dying with curiosity, to know what that name, and those circumstances were—but he saw plainly that his only way to learn any thing of Mr. Delaney was to suffer him to believe that all was already known to him (Denzil).

It was in vain, however, that Denzil endeavoured, during the remainder of their walk, to draw his companion into any conversation on the events to which he had alluded, as having driven his unhappy relative from society, and degraded him into a homeless, houseless vagabond.

Mrs. Delaney's quick eye soon discovered that something had occurred to disturb her husband and his friend, but her uneasiness was discovered rather by looks than words, and to those Mr. Delaney replied so significantly, that Denzil could not doubt that, in spite of his parade respecting her sensibility, &c., she would be speedily put in possession of all that had passed.

With disgust Denzil turned from her assumed gentleness and delicacy of manner, as he recalled to his memory the observations he had heard her brother make on her conduct, and that of her daughters towards him. What sincerity could there be in that show of maternal mildness and attention, which she invariably displayed towards him, a mere stranger, when it was clear that she not only herself disregarded the natural ties of blood and affection, but inculcated in her children the same unfeeling and unnatural conduct?

The remainder of the evening was passed in vain attempts on all sides to disguise the feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction, which were now shared by all. Julia sighed, and looked, and sighed again, and sang her most pathetic songs to her guitar, without seeming to create any feeling but that of evident wearisomeness and languor in Denzil, who, at length, abruptly arose, and declining to sit down to the supper-table—a meal which the family generally made a scene of conviviality and mirth—retired to his room, to meditate undisturbed upon the strange coincidence which had again placed, as it were, within his reach, the means of ascertaining all that he wished to know respecting his own birth, and the fate of his mother, and then again snatched it away.

CHAPTER X.

> "Tis said she once was beautiful, and still
> Deep rays of loveliness around her form
> Beam, as the rainbow that succeeds the storm
> Brightens a glorious ruin.
> Reserve and womanly pride are in her look,
> Though temper'd into meekness: she can brook
> Unkindness and neglect from those she loves,
> Because she feels it undeserved; which proves
> That firm and conscious rectitude hath power
> To blunt Fate's darts in sorrow's darkest hour."

The result of Denzil's midnight musings was a determination, in the first place, not to trust solely to Mr. Delaney to discover the abode of the stranger, but to exert every means that money and personal exertion could af-

ford; and, in the second, he resolved to get away from the Delaneys as soon as possible.

In pursuance of the first, he arose even before his usual early hour, though sleep had been nearly a stranger to his eye-lids during the night. Scarcely knowing what were his intentions, or whither he was going, he softly descended the staircase of the hotel. No one appeared to have risen from their slumbers, and he was just crossing the threshold when a man, whom he recognised as an inferior servant of the establishment, approached him——

"I have a letter for you, monsieur," he observed; "how lucky I am, so soon to have the honour of giving it into your hands with secrecy; for I was charged that no one but monsieur should see it, and I have been faithful to my trust. Ah, monsieur, I should have been in despair, if I had missed this *grande* opportunity."

Denzil amply rewarded the messenger, and hastily returned to his room, to read the letter, which he had seen, at a single glance, was in a hand unknown to him, and without any signature except the initials—"E. T." It was as follows:—

"Had I no other motive for wishing to contribute, as far as lies in my power, to your welfare, the act of generosity and humanity which you last night performed, without knowing how near and dear a claim the parties possessed upon your feelings, would have induced me to caution you—to beg—to entreat—would I dare say to command—but your mother has forfeited her right to controul her son, else would she, in the strongest terms, command you—never to unite your fate with one of the Delaney family! Yes, it is your mother who addresses

you, and who enjoins you, as you value your own happiness and honour, to give up for ever the girl whom she knows to be totally unworthy of you. Do you know the family with whom you are associated? Are you aware of their base, their mercenary motives, in seeking an alliance with you? Oh, no, you do not—you cannot know them, as I know them—or you would spurn them with contempt. Delaney is a cold, calculating villain. His wife and daughters——I cannot speak of them, I cannot think of them, without detestation! Their conduct towards one who, let her faults be what they may, had every claim that her helpless sex, her youth, her misery could give—but I will not enter upon a theme which makes my blood boil with indignation! Again I entreat, I adjure you not to be deceived by their specious pretences, by their assumed virtues, which are but a mask, that will be thrown off whenever they feel that they have you securely in their power. Heaven, in its mercy, avert that that day should ever arrive! It would be a finishing stroke to my misery! Can you doubt that I am miserable?—If it were only the thought that I shall never claim you as my son, that I shall never clasp you in my arms, nor rest this burning, aching head on your shoulder—think you not that this alone would be sufficient to make me wretched? But when I look around me—when I think of all I have suffered, and all that yet probably awaits me—when I see my children deprived even of—— *My children!* Great God! dare I claim them as such?—Oh, Denzil!—Denzil you are called, they told me it was another name; but my memory fails me, and, after all, *he* had a right to call you what he pleased. Heaven bless him! to me he was unjust and cruel—for I did not de-

serve all he accused me of, though I was in some points guilty—but it is the way of the world! How often since that, have I been accused of crimes which my whole soul revolted at—but I was condemned, because I was poor and miserable! Farewell, I have wandered far from that to which I have promised to confine my letter, namely, to caution you against the wretches who have insulted and——but I shall yet live to triumph in their fall! It is the first time, since you were an infant, that I have dared to call you my son;—you have forgotten, but I have not, the bitter tears I then shed over you, and yet, even then, I was proud of you! I would have died for you! Oh, your father! your cruel father!—I dare not write any more, for my brain is wandering.

"E. T."

"I charge you, do not let the Delaneys see this letter, or know that I have written. They are capable of any thing, and my life might be forfeited to their revenge.

"E. T."

Denzil read this letter with the most tumultuous feelings of doubt, agony, and joy. His mother then was living—it was her hand that had traced these incoherent lines, and even now, perhaps, she was within a short distance of him.

Hastily thrusting the letter into his bosom, he rushed down the stairs in search of the man who had delivered it to him. It was some time before he could find him, and then he could learn nothing but that a strange man, whom he had met with near the door of the hotel, had given him the letter, desiring him to deliver it with all possible secrecy and speed, and enforcing

his request by a present and an assurance that Monsieur Montgomery would further reward him.

"Which I have found quite true," continued the domestic, with a low bow; "and I should be happy to be favoured with any farther commands of Monsieur."

"I would give you the whole of this," said Denzil, displaying his purse, "if you could trace out the home or residence of that man—or could put me in a way of doing so."

"*Morbleu*, Monsieur! I would serve you by day or by night, and I would run through every street till I found him; but I am kept close in the kitchen here all day, and——"

"Have you any objection to give up your place, and hire yourself to me?—I will speak to your master, and make every thing right, if you approve it," exclaimed Denzil.

"I am at milord's disposal, returned the man," with a bow down to the ground.

"Well, then, I will take all consequences on myself—come with me to my apartment."

Rising at every step on his toes, with all the dignity of a man who had met with an unexpected promotion, Jacques followed Denzil to his chamber, and from thence, having received his instructions how to act, sallied out upon his task of inquiring into such places as he thought likely to afford shelter to one of whose pursuits and station Denzil gave him as accurate an idea as he possibly could.

Too restless, however, to await at home the result of the exertions of his active and intelligent ambassador, Denzil, as soon as he had a little recovered from the

violent agitation he had suffered, repaired to the spot where he had, on the previous night, encountered the mysterious stranger.

The walks were, at this early hour, quite empty, and Denzil had time and opportunity again and again to ponder over the letter which had excited such a variety of feelings in his bosom.

"Would I could at once speak peace to her heart, at least on this subject!" he exclaimed, as he read over the lines, in which she adjured him not to connect his fate with that of Julia Delaney. "Would that all the evils of which she complains were as visionary and unfounded as her fears on this head. Julia Delaney!" he exclaimed, in a tone of contempt.

"And what of Julia Delaney, Mr. Montgomery?" exclaimed a voice immediately behind him.

Denzil looked round, and encountered the fierce look of Mr. Delaney, the younger.

"I do not know, sir, that I am bound to give you an account of my secret thoughts," replied Denzil, returning his stern glance, "even though you have stolen unawares upon them, and heard me repeat the name of your sister."

"But I think otherwise, Mr. Montgomery," replied the young man; "I think that I have a right to know even your thoughts, when my sister is the subject of them—and I demand to know, what are your feelings and intentions towards her? You have trifled quite long enough with her peace of mind, without coming to any definitive explanation."

"It is false!" exclaimed Denzil, with vehemence. "I have never trifled with her—never have behaved

otherwise to her than I have done to her sister and her mother—never considered her in any other light than as a common acquaintance—nor never have led her to believe, by any one action or word of mine, that I had any other views."

"It is well, sir—it is very well!" exclaimed Delaney, boiling with rage, "you have indeed given me a clear explanation—a very clear one! I can no longer doubt your designs, sir—no longer doubt that you are, what I always suspected you to be, a smooth-tongued hypocrite! But do not expect you are to get off in this way—my sister's reputation and her friends' happiness are at stake, and I will force you to do her and them justice, or I will have your heart's blood!"

"Mr. Delaney," returned Denzil, with coolness, "I will tell you at once, candidly and honestly, that I am neither to be bullied nor persuaded into having your sister. Long before I saw her, my fate was fixed—and I should be the villain you would persuade me I am, if I could ever have given, either directly or indirectly, your sister reason to conclude that she was the object of my choice. I acknowledge that, within the last few days, my eyes have been opened to the views of your friends on this point, and I have been meditating on the best means of putting an end, at once, to all uncertainty on the subject. Within the last few hours, an additional motive has occurred to hasten this determination; and it was my intention now, as soon as I returned to the hotel, to announce my speedy separation from your family. I have now stated all my feelings on the subject—if you feel yourself aggrieved, you are welcome to take what means of reparation you please—but this I solemnly assure you,

that no power on earth will induce me to retract my solemn determination, never to marry your sister!"

"Then you are a villain, and a liar!" exclaimed the savage, in a most ferocious tone.

A violent blow, the effect of a sudden impulse of passion, which Denzil could not check, laid Delaney prostrate on the ground, the moment he had uttered these words

Several people now approached, and Denzil having coolly observed, "you will find me at the Hotel ——, Mr. Delaney, when you want me," walked on, leaving the latter to the care of the bystanders.

Denzil's first reflections on the affray which had taken place, were dictated by unmixed rage and contempt. He now, indeed, saw plainly that a deliberate scheme had been formed, to entrap him into a marriage from which his heart revolted, and he was convinced that the family would not easily relinquish the attempt.

For several hours, however, he remained undisturbed, and after the first ebullitions of anger and vexation had subsided, the occurrences of the morning gradually faded from his remembrance, and again he became absorbed in the feelings which his mother's letter had occasioned; but, alas, what were those feelings, but those of sorrow and of shame! The allusion to his father, short and inconclusive as it was, excited the most violent emotions, while her admission, in another part of her letter, that she had in part deserved his treatment to her, led to conclusions the most painful and degrading.

"Would to heaven I could once behold her under my protection!—she would, at least, be saved from the misery and degradation she is now suffering! Can it be

possible that it is her to whom that man alluded by the name of Elinor—her who, he said, was suffering poverty and sickness?"

The thought was agonising, and he was pacing the room in a paroxysm of grief, when Mr. Delaney, senior, entered unannounced.

"What is the meaning of all this, Mr. Montgomery?" he exclaimed. "May I still continue to consider you as my friend—the friend towards whom, from the first hour I beheld him, I felt and professed the affection of a father? What is it that you and Dennis have quarrelled about? Sit down, and coolly explain to me what can have occasioned this unhappy misunderstanding, which has only just come to our knowledge, through the medium of one of the servants of the hotel, who heard it from some of those who witnessed it. Julia and Mrs. Delaney have been in hysterics ever since, and I, having at last found out whither you had withdrawn yourself, came hither directly, to learn the truth of the report."

"I am very sorry for it, sir," returned Denzil coolly, "as your son could have undoubtedly given you a much clearer explanation of a circumstance which originated solely with him. I cannot enter into the subject with you, and therefore you must excuse my referring you entirely to him."

Mr. Delaney was evidently disconcerted at the cool and firm tone which Denzil assumed.

"This is strange treatment, Mr. Montgomery, towards one who has not only felt the affection of a father towards you, but flattered himself that, at no very distant period, he should have a right to claim that title. Julia——"

"I have nothing to say on the subject of Miss Julia Delaney's feelings, any more than on those of any other of her family. From my first introduction to you, up to the present hour, I have never disguised what, indeed, you in some measure forced me into declaring in the commencement of our acquaintance, namely, that my melancholy and ill-health arose from some unfortunate circumstances which had fixed my fate for ever; nor can I blame myself for having, in any one instance, countenanced the supposition which it seems you, sir, have indulged, that I felt any particular predilection for one of your daughters, more than the other."

"Then you mean, Mr. Montgomery, expressly to say, that you do not mean to marry Julia?" said Mr. Delaney, with great vehemence.

"I do mean expressly to say so, sir," replied Denzil, coolly; "and I also mean to say——"

"That is quite enough, sir, quite enough, Mr. Denzil Montgomery," interrupted Mr. Delaney, hastily; "I have heard quite sufficient to convince me that I have been grossly deceived in your character—grossly, cruelly deceived!—I have given you credit, Mr. Montgomery, for being a man of honour—a man of the most refined, the most delicate feelings—one who was incapable of trifling with the affections of a young and innocent female, and then leaving her to misery and shame, merely because you have not bound yourself by any specific declaration or promise. You must have long seen and known, Mr. Montgomery, that Julia's whole heart was given to you—you have tacitly encouraged her enthusiastic affection, and you have deluded, not only her, but her mother and myself, into the belief that you had found,

in her devoted attachment, an antidote to the sorrow and disappointment occasioned by your former unfortunate—"

"*If* you or your daughter, sir, have been so deluded," interrupted Denzil, laying a strong emphasis on the word "if," while his countenance most expressively seconded the doubt which it was intended to convey.

Mr. Delaney's passion rose at the insinuation. "Do you dare, sir, to hint a doubt of my veracity?" he exclaimed, in a blustering tone.

"I dare do more, sir, since you put me to the test," replied Denzil, with calmness, "I dare tell you that I consider—that I *know*—the whole of your pathetic statement to be false—I repeat it, false! and part only of a plan, by which you have attempted to secure to your daughter, what you were pleased to consider an eligible marriage, and which plan the violence of your son, has, perhaps prematurely, brought to a crisis. This candid avowal on my part will, I hope," he continued, in a contemptuous tone, "I trust, Mr. Delaney, prevent your having any further trouble on the subject—since it will convince you that I am neither to be bullied nor tricked into a compliance with your wishes."

Mr. Delaney's face became livid with passion—his lips quivered, and for some moments he seemed unable to command his voice to utter a reply.

At length, however, the torrent of his rage broke forth, and every epithet which malice and disappointment could suggest, was bestowed upon Denzil, who bore it all with the most philosophic indifference and silence, until, on Mr. Delaney's reiterating his determination to have satisfaction for the injury which the honour of his family had received, he observed——

"I am quite ready to meet your demand for satisfaction, in any way you may think proper, Mr. Delaney; and therefore I beg you will spare yourself all unnecessary denunciations."

Mr. Delaney flung out of the room, muttering some indistinct expressions of vengeance, and Denzil soon lost all recollection of him or his concerns, in the intense and absorbing interest he felt in the discovery of his mother's existence.

From the dreams which this subject gave birth to in his mind, he was, however, aroused by the entrance of his servant Ned, who, with his eyes swelled and black, and the front of his clothes covered with blood, came into the room in so violent a passion, that, for some time, he was totally unintelligible, as to what had occasioned his appearance or his rage.

At length, however, it was explained—Ned had, according to his master's orders, been to the Hotel d'Angleterre to remove the clothes, &c. of the latter. To Ned's utter surprise and indignation, however, the master of the house, instigated, as he acknowledged, by the Delaneys, had insisted that not an article should be removed, until his bill was paid; and Ned, knowing that his master had already paid pretty handsomely for his accommodations, had in consequence indulged in some strictures which had the effect of rousing the ire of the younger Mr. Delaney, who had, it appeared, with the aid of his two servants, perpetrated the violence of which the poor lad's appearance was a sufficient testimony.

"Oi woudna' ha' moinded," exclaimed Ned, "if they had ha' fought fair—one down and t'other come on—but I had all three a-top o' me at once—and if the Frenchmen

had not interfered, and threatened to send for the *John-darms*, I verily think they had ha' taken the loife o' me."

Enraged beyond all measure at this treatment of his servant, Denzil, forgetful of all his resolutions of prudence and calmness in his conduct towards the Delaneys, had taken his hat, intending to go to the hotel, and demand personally reparation for this insult, when he was prevented by two notes being delivered to him, which the servant of the hotel said, had been brought at the same moment, by two different persons.

The first which he opened was from Mr. Dennis Delaney, requesting, in very laconic terms, that, if Mr. Denzil Montgomery valued his character as a gentleman and a man of honour, he would not quit Paris until the said Mr. Dennis Delaney should have had some further communication with him; and concluding by saying, that in the course of the day, probably, or at furthest the next day, a friend of Mr. Delaney's would wait upon Mr. Montgomery, to demand satisfaction for the insult Mr. Dennis Delaney had received, and to fix the mode, time, place of meeting, &c. &c., according to the usual forms in such cases.

Denzil threw this note aside with an expression of contempt, and opened the other, the hand-writing of which he did not at first recognise; but the signature informed him that it was from Miss Julia Delaney, and in a very different strain from the laconic epistle of her brother—It was as follows:—

"My dear, dearest Denzil,

"What can possibly have occasioned the difference which I have but within these few minutes learned has

arisen between you and my hot-headed, impetuous brother?—who, I am sure, whatever he may have done or said to offend you, in reality loves you as his life; and I am sure would, in his heart, give the world to be reconciled to you, though his proud spirit will not own it. Oh, dear Denzil! what I have suffered since I found you had left us, and left us, too, in anger! Mamma is in despair, and seriously ill. You know how attached she has ever shewn herself to you, and how tender she has been towards you—her own children, I am sure, are not more dear to her, nor would she be more seriously affected had she lost Maurice, or even her own Julia, who, you know, is a bit of a pet, and has therefore all the faults of a spoiled child—though you have corrected her of a great many, and would effect an entire reform; but if you are——oh no, dear Denzil, you never can be so cruel, as to intend entirely to desert me, because my brother has not behaved properly; for I know very well that it is he only who is in fault, though neither he nor papa will own what the quarrel has been about. Do, dear Denzil, for my sake, forgive him, and shake hands with him, and make us all happy by coming home again. You must come, or I shall certainly come and fetch you; for I have succeeded in learning where you are, as you will know by this note, which I am writing by stealth, while mamma, who is exhausted by weeping, is asleep. I know she would be very angry if she were to discover that I have written—for, much as she laments your departure, she told me that it would be highly improper, and lower me in your eyes, if I should write to you; but I have no notion of such ceremonies—I am sure, I have not a thought in the world that I would conceal from you, and why should it be

improper that I should tell you that I am wretched and unhappy until I see you again? Pray do not delay your return, dear Denzil, or I shall begin to think you are, indeed, what nothing but your own act and deed could persuade me of, unkind and cruel to

"Yours, ever and ever,

"JULIA DELANEY."

Denzil read this with equal contempt and indifference as he had done the former epistle; to Mr. Delaney's, indeed, he considered it necessary to reply, and therefore hastily wrote——

"Mr. Montgomery will be ready to give Mr. Delaney the meeting, whenever he requires it; but he deprecates all delay, as circumstances may render it imperative that Mr. M. should quit Paris in a few days."

"A pretty affair I have involved myself in!" thought Denzil, as he paced up and down the room, after the departure of his messenger with this note. "I have suffered myself to be duped out of nearly all my ready cash, by a sharper—and now I must either be bullied into marrying his daughter, or run the risk either of committing murder, or of being murdered. And this is my boasted prudence? These are the results of the excellent lessons I have received!" He heaved a deep sigh, as he thought what the feelings of Mr. Levison and Fanny would be, should he fall a victim in the approaching contest; for such, he doubted not, must take place, now that his reply to Mr. Dennis Delaney, and his silence to his sister, would convince them that he was

determined not to fulfil their expectations. But there was another thought, even more painful than those connected with the friends of his youth, which now thrilled through his heart——His mother! Was he to discover her, only, perhaps, to quit her for ever?—to leave her even more desolate and forlorn than before; for, while she knew he lived, even though estranged from him, she must have felt that she had some dependance, some tie, which she could at any time claim.

He caught the eye of his servant (who had, at his desire, remained in the room, until the arrival of the surgeon, whom he had sent for to examine the wounds and bruises he had received) fixed intently on him, and, assuming a calmness he did not feel, he inquired of him whether Jacques, the Frenchman he had engaged, had returned.

Ned had forgotten to mention that he had met Jacques, who had desired him to tell his master that he believed he had discovered a clue to the person of whom he was in search; and that he would return, the moment he had ascertained the correctness of his information.

Denzil's anxiety increased tenfold, at this intelligence. "Could I but see her," he reflected, "before this affair takes place, I might then perhaps be enabled to provide that she should not suffer the miseries of poverty; but now, uncertain as I am of her very name, I know not how to act!"

A thousand distressing and agitating thoughts contributed to depress his spirits, and he passed a long and miserable day of anxiety and doubt, for Jacques returned not until night, and then the information he brought was so inconclusive, that it left the affair almost as much in

suspense as before; and, in addition, Jacques had contrived to get so intoxicated, that Denzil scarcely knew whether he could depend even on the statements he made.

"He had," he said, "after the most indefatigable and diligent research, discovered that a man, who was known by the name of Mathieu, and who exactly answered to the description of the person who had delivered to him the letter, had been living in a wretched lodging, in one of the Fauxbourgs, with a female, whom he called his daughter. That her ostensible occupation was making little wicker baskets, but that she was also known to be a fortune-teller, and had recently removed from this apartment, in consequence of the threatened interference of the police with her profession."

Little doubt, however, was entertained by the people of the house where she had resided, that they should be able to trace them to the place where they now were, in a very short time; and Jacques added, that the promise of a reward which he had made them, would, no doubt, induce them very quickly to accomplish the object.

Denzil's heart thrilled with agony. "Could it be possible that this degraded being was his mother?" the thought was dreadful, and yet there appeared but too much reason to fear that this was the case.

"She is *called* his daughter," he repeated aloud, "and if she is not——"

"Most likely, Monsieur, she is not," observed the officious Jacques, who imagined he spoke to him, "such creatures as these——"

He stopped, in evident alarm at the fierce look with which Denzil regarded him, as he uttered these words.

"*Pardonnez moi*, Monsieur—I did not know—that is, I did not think——"

"You are not required to think at all about the affair—confine yourself to performing the service I require of you, and that will be sufficient," returned Denzil; "you may go, and, in the morning, I trust you will be successful in your attempt to find the person whom I wish to see."

It was with difficulty Denzil had constrained himself to assume this calmness, but when the man quitted the room, he gave way to the agitation which swelled in his bosom almost to suffocation. But he was not long permitted to indulge these sensations, for Ned entered to announce Mr. Drennan—a person whom he had once seen at Mr. Delaney's dinner-table, and who, he rightly conjectured, was now come from him.

Mr. Drennan entered, with the easy and assured air of a man, who considered the business he had come upon, in the light of an every-day occurrence.

"You are after guessing, I suppose, that I come from my friends, the Delaneys?" he observed.

"I conclude, sir, you can have no other business with me," returned Denzil; "and I am quite ready to listen to any thing you have to communicate."

"Faith, then, and it's little I have to tell you that you do not know already," he replied. "My friend, Dennis Delaney, informs me that you have injured him, and unless you are willing to make some other reparation, he demands such satisfaction as is usual between gentleman and gentleman, under such circumstances; but, as I'm a peaceable man myself, and don't like driving things to an extremity, if it can be avoided——and

besides, as I know that there's a certain beautiful creature, who, if you should be shot, as it's ten chances to one you are, for Dennis is a pretty sure hand, and has already brought down his man, (which is the true reason why the family are here at the present speaking)—as I say, there's a lovely girl, who——"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted Denzil, "I would thank you to confine yourself to the business which brought you here, and that, I suppose, is to arrange——"

"You are quite right," resumed Mr. Drennan, "I came to make the arrangements for a meeting between you and my friend Dennis, if the business cannot be otherwise accommodated; but I hope you will listen to reason, and not go to peril your life for a trifling misunderstanding, which might easily be settled. They tell me you have been paying your addresses to my little friend Julia——"

"Whoever has told you so, has asserted a wilful falsehood, sir!" interrupted Denzil. "I have never addressed—never considered,—and never treated Julia Delaney with the slightest preference—and that the whole family are aware of, as well as the young lady herself."

"What, Mr. Montgomery! that is your name, I believe?"

Denzil bowed his head in token of assent, while a slight blush crossed his cheek, as he fancied there was a peculiar emphasis laid upon the interrogation.

"Well, then, Mr. Montgomery," resumed the speaker, "would you persuade me that Julia Delaney would consider you as her affianced husband, and all the family look upon you and speak of you in the same light, without your having given them authority to do so?"

"I have told you, sir, that it is so—you are at liberty to believe as you please," replied Denzil; "but, as I before said, I wish not to enter on any subject but that which has brought you hither."

Mr. Drennan's confidence seemed considerably damped by the cool manner in which this was uttered——

"Well, Mr. Montgomery," he observed, "it must of course be as you please; and therefore I have nothing to do but to acquaint you——but have you no friend, with whom I can make the necessary arrangements?"

"I have neither friends nor acquaintances here, sir," replied Denzil, "but, I presume, you will see that all proper——"

"Oh, certainly, certainly, Mr. Montgomery—I will take care that justice is done to both parties; nevertheless, it is very unusual, in affairs of this kind, for gentlemen to go to the ground without being mutually attended by a friend. I do not know what is to be done—perhaps you will allow me time to consult my friend Delaney on the subject."

"Certainly, sir, I am in no hurry," replied Denzil, in an indifferent tone. "I am the aggressor—according to your statement—and not the aggrieved party; and therefore am willing to wait."

Mr. Drennan looked earnestly at him for some moments—"Really, I am very sorry, Mr. Montgomery, that this affair cannot be accommodated without a hostile meeting."

"It is not my fault, sir, if it cannot," replied Denzil; "I have no particular passion for fighting—but I never will submit to own myself in the wrong, when I know I am not; nor will I permit false assertions to be made respecting my conduct, without vindicating myself."

Mr. Drennan seemed to be communing with himself for some minutes—"I shall do myself the pleasure of waiting upon you, in an hour or two, Mr. Montgomery," he at length observed, "and if this affair cannot be otherwise accommodated, you will, perhaps, not object to my introducing a person to you, who will, I am sure, act in every respect as your friend, and who is perfectly acquainted with all the etiquette usual on such occasions."

"I shall feel greatly indebted to you, sir," returned Denzil; "and, without wishing to shake your confidence in your friends, I beg to assure you that I have neither done or will do any thing to disgrace your recommendation."

"I believe you, from the bottom of my soul!" returned Mr. Drennan, shaking him heartily by the hand; "and, if I were not engaged already, I would myself offer to be your friend. I assure you, sir, that I never was more interested for any young man in my life, than I am for you; and it would give me the greatest pleasure could I, consistently with my friend Mr. Delaney's honour, accommodate this affair.

"Mr. Delaney's *honour*, I believe, sir," said Denzil, with strong emphasis, "has very little to do with the affair; but Mr. Delaney knows best his own feelings, and if he likes to place them to the account of wounded honour, e'en let it be so."

Mr. Drennan remained silent, but his looks betrayed considerable uneasiness, and he seemed very unwilling to depart, without making another effort to bring the affair to an amicable termination.

"You came from England, I understand, with my friend Delaney's family."

"We were accidentally passengers by the same vessel," replied Montgomery.

"But you knew them before sure, or I am grossly misinformed; and, 'faith, I'd be sorry to think they would impose upon me," returned Mr. Drennan.

"I know not what date they may have been pleased to affix to our acquaintance," said Denzil, "my memory carries me no further back than to a few hours previous to our sailing in the packet for Calais."

"A few hours only!" repeated Mr. Drennan. "By the powers, then, Mr. Montgomery, that would look like a confirmation of the tale of your having fallen violently in love with Miss Delaney at first sight—if it is true that you advanced a considerable sum of money to save Mr. Delaney from an arrest."

"I am glad Mr. Delaney does *recollect* that part of the affair," observed Montgomery, significantly.

"Oh, 'faith, I do not say that I heard it from Delaney," returned Mr. Drennan, laughing, "it appears, however, there was some truth in the story."

"Too much, as to my folly," replied Denzil, drily.

"And will you pretend to say now, Mr. Montgomery, that you had not an eye to the daughter, when you were so liberal to the father?" returned Mr. Drennan.

"I do not *pretend* anything about it, sir," said Montgomery, rather angrily, "but the fact is, at this moment I do not remember that I had even seen Mr. Delaney's family, at the time that I was foolish enough—but I know not why I should enter into these explanations, Mr. Drennan—your business with me, I believe, was merely to demand——"

"Whew!" whistled Mr. Drennan, with peculiar sig-

nificance, "what a hot-headed young man you are! And I had been taught to believe you just clean the contrary, too—but that's nothing; only I would just ask you, in plain truth and candour, whether you ought to be angry with a man for wanting to prove to his own satisfaction that you are less blameable than you have been represented to him. If you think I have had any other reason for asking you so many questions, you may take my word and honour, as a gentleman, that you are mistaken."

"Excuse me, sir," said Montgomery, bowing, "I feel ashamed of my petulance—but, really, the whole subject is so revolting to me, and I am so sick of hearing any thing respecting my assumed pretensions to Miss Delaney, towards whom, I assert, most unequivocally, and, to borrow your expression, on the word and honour of a gentleman, I never shewed any attachment, distinct from that which every female has a right to claim and expect, and which have been equally bestowed on her mother and sister. Circumstances," he added, "or, probably, I should rather say, design, has placed Julia oftener in the way of receiving those attentions, than either of the other ladies; but, I do assure you, it was never my wish that it should be so, though it appears I am now to be made responsible for it."

"Well, my dear sir," returned Mr. Drennan, "I feel that I have taken a liberty with you, in eliciting this confession; but I hope it is not an unpardonable one, and, to make some amends, I promise you, I shall do all in my power to make Mr. Dennis Delaney listen to reason. As to Julia, I am afraid that it would be more than I dare do, to offer to persuade her that you are not,

nor ever were in love with her—and, indeed, to tell you a bit of my mind, I suspect there are very few young men who would have been so favoured as you have been, without feeling a little more grateful to the pretty Julia, than it appears you do—but there's no accounting for tastes!"

Denzil only smiled in reply to this elegant exordium, and Mr. Drennan having seemingly exhausted his stock of eloquence, departed, renewing his promise to bring a gentleman to act as Mr. Montgomery's friend.

The rapidity with which this had passed, and the *nonchalance* and matter-of-course manner in which Mr. Dennis Delaney's messenger had apparently considered the affair, had hitherto prevented Montgomery's reflecting, with the seriousness it deserved, on the affair in which he was involved. The last expression of Mr. Drennan, however, dwelt on his ear, and as he reseated himself at his writing-table, he reiterated the word "*friend.*"

"And such is the fashionable acceptation of the word," he exclaimed; "the man who is willing to take the trouble to stand by, in order to see that I murder, or am murdered, according to due form and rule, is called my *friend!* Alas, how different has been my estimation of that title—yet I have now no friends!—or if they whom once I thought such, even now admit the claim—how soon will they have cause to lament it! How soon will they feel that I have forfeited all claims to the distinction!"

Lost in these and similar reflections, he had sat for a considerable time, when he was roused by the entrance of a servant who announced that a female, who refused

to give any name, requested to see Mr. Montgomery alone, for a few minutes.

Denzil's first thought was, that it must be the cause of all his embarrassment—Julia Delaney; and, desirous of avoiding the scene which he knew would be acted, if it should be that sentimental fair-one, he hesitated what answer he should give the man, who requested to know whether he should admit her.

"What sort of a female is it?" he demanded, after a moment's pause, "is it——is she young, handsome? Do you know Miss Delaney?—It is not her, is it?"

"I have not *l'honneur, milor,* to know *la demoiselle* you speak of, *milor,*" returned the man, who was one of the servants of the house, and had been there but a few days; "but *cette dame* is not ver young, and, for handsome, *peut-être* she may be *tres jolie,* but her face is covered wit a veil so thick——"

"It is my mother! None else could seek concealment!" thought Denzil. "Fly!—go, instantly admit her!" he exclaimed aloud.

The man looked astonished—but hastened instantly to obey his orders, and Denzil gathered up the papers which were scattered on the table, amongst which were Mr. and Miss Delaney's notes, and locked them in his desk.

He had scarcely completed this before the servant ushered in the lady; but the first glimpse of her figure brought with it extreme disappointment—for, instead of the tall, slender, and elegant form he expected to see, he beheld a short and matronly person, whom the large cloak and thick veil prevented him from at first discovering was no other than Mrs. Delaney.

Denzil started, as she threw off the incumbrances which had concealed her from him, and fixed her soft and still handsome eyes upon him.

"You do not welcome me, Mr. Montgomery," she observed, in her usual gentle tone. "I had flattered myself that, whatever might be your feelings towards some part of my family, your resentment would not extend to me—but I see that I deceived myself, and I am now sorry that I have so far departed from propriety, as to intrude my unwelcome visit upon you."

She burst into tears, and Denzil, vexed, confused, and embarrassed to such an extent as scarcely to be conscious what he said, exclaimed——

"Forgive me, dear madam, I am indeed astonished to see you here, but I have no resentment towards you or your family. From yourself, indeed, I have never received any thing but uniform kindness, and I have ever attempted to prove my gratitude——"

"Gratitude, Denzil," she repeated, with emphasis. "Alas! it is from me that gratitude is due! How often has your kindness soothed, your liberality relieved me, in sorrow and suffering! Oh, Mr. Montgomery, think not that my heart can ever partake in the feelings that have been displayed towards you, by those whom it is my misfortune to be connected with! No, be assured that —however the ties by which I am bound compel me to dissemble—I admire and applaud your conduct! But I am a mother, Denzil, and though justice obliges me to acknowledge that I condemn the conduct of my children, I still feel for them with all a mother's fondness."

Denzil remained silent—he knew not, indeed, what to say—for he could not tell what conclusion to draw from

this confession and admission of faults, which he well knew she had not the power, even if she had the will, to amend.

Mrs. Delaney, however, did not leave him long in ignorance of her motives.

"Julia, Mr. Montgomery," she again resumed, "dare I mention her name to you?—poor, unhappy girl, she is in despair at the misery she has brought on you, on all of us, by her ungovernable passion. Alas, she deceived herself, as well as her father and brother, in representing that you had avowed your affection for her! She believed what she wished——"

"Pardon me, madam," interrupted Denzil, "if I ask you to what all this tends? Miss Delaney needs not this vindication to me—if she can satisfy you that she has deceived herself, as well as her friends, it is quite sufficient, but, really, this is a subject I know not how to discuss—It is so repulsive to me, so embarrassing, so utterly irreconcilable with the delicacy which I would wish to preserve towards——" he hesitated, and Mrs. Delaney resumed,

"You ask me what is the object of my coming here, Mr. Montgomery," she observed. "I confess I know not how to answer you—I came here from the impulse of my heart, which would not believe that you could seriously resolve to sacrifice the peace of a whole family, and consign to despair a girl whose only fault is being too susceptible of your merit."

"I cannot listen to this, madam," interrupted Montgomery, impatiently, "and to put an end at once to any mistaken ideas or expectations, I will candidly tell you that it is utterly impossible I can feel towards your daughter, otherwise than I have always professed myself.

Pardon me if am compelled to appear rude and abrup,—you are aware that it is not my seeking—but I am most anxious to put an end to all discussion on this most painful subject."

"Painful, indeed," returned Mrs. Delaney, weeping still more bitterly. "Oh, Mr. Montgomery, if you knew what I suffer—but why should I expect pity from you? and yet I feel for you as well as for my own children! Ah, how long have I flattered myself that I should have one day a right to call you by the title of my son!—how often have I thought that I should find, in your kindness and liberal feeling, a compensation for the headstrong and inconsiderate conduct of that mad-headed young man, whose violence and rash conduct keeps me in continual terror! Even now I tremble for the consequences of this affair! I tremble lest his resentment against you—unjust as I feel it to be——but your principles, your good sense, Mr. Montgomery, will, I trust, prevent your being irritated by his folly—you will not, I am sure you will not, listen to him, should he (which I dread he will,) demand satisfaction of you for the injury and insult he imagines you have offered his family! Promise me, Mr. Montgomery, that you will not meet him. Oh, if you should, and either were to fall——"

"I have no fear, madam," interrupted Denzil, evasively, "that Mr. Maurice Delaney will pursue his resentment any further than he has done; and, be assured, my principles and feelings would lead me to avoid rather than seek the sanguinary mode of settling our differences which you so justly deprecate. Let me entreat you, therefore, to return home, and console yourself with the assurance that I am much more disposed to conciliate, if

I can do so with honour, than to have recourse to violence."

"Alas, alas, this is but equivocal, Mr. Montgomery," she exclaimed. "You avoid promising me that——"

"Really, madam, this is too much to expect," interrupted Denzil, impatiently. "I have told you I will conciliate your son, if I can do so, with a due regard to my own honour; and farther than this, you cannot expect that I should pledge myself. Let me beg, therefore, for your own sake, that you will put an end to this interview, so painful to both of us."

"I cannot—Oh, Heavens, I cannot return home in this dreadful uncertainty!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Mr. Montgomery, only place yourself for a moment in my situation—but no, you cannot—you cannot comprehend a mother's feelings, a mother's grief, at beholding an amiable, accomplished, and, I will say, beautiful daughter reduced to despair, by the indifference of the man to whom she has given her young heart!—a mother, dreading that her only son—a fine, noble young man, whose only fault is his impetuosity, and too fine sense of honour, perhaps about to expose his life, or sacrifice that of another—and that other scarcely less dear to me than himself—in revenge for the wrongs done to his sister! Oh, no, you cannot, cannot feel for me, or you would not hesitate to save me from distraction and despair! And where, after all, Mr. Montgomery, would be the mighty sacrifice? Julia is your equal in all but fortune! Alas, little did I think, after the splendid offers that she has refused, I should ever have to sue to one who rejects her—rejects her only because she has been so candid, so imprudent, I may say, as to let him see that she cannot live without him."

The pity which Montgomery had at first given to Mrs. Delaney's tears and apparent distress, had been fast disappearing before her pertinacity, and evident want of that delicacy which he considered no circumstances ought to banish from the mind and manners of a female—but her last speech completely obliterated all his sympathy with her feelings, or rather raised the doubt in his mind whether she really possessed any of the acute sensibility which she thus paraded. He recollected all the reasons he had to believe that the whole family were false, artificial, and deceptive; and he could not but come to the conclusion, that Mrs. Delaney's theatrical declamation, and the evidently forced hysterical sobs and tears with which it was accompanied, were merely the dictates of consummate art, assumed in the hope of working upon his inexperience, and moulding him to her wishes.

Indignant at the thought that they should consider him so weak as thus to be made subservient to their purposes, and heartily despising the woman who could thus prostitute superior talents for such an unworthy purpose, his countenance bore the most expressive marks of the disdain he felt, and rising from his chair he observed—

"Forgive me, madam, it can neither benefit you nor myself to continue this *scene* any longer—I am also in expectation of a visitor, to whom your presence here would oblige me to enter into explanations derogatory to you, and highly unpleasant to me."

"Am I to understand, then, Mr. Montgomery, that you mean to send me away thus abruptly, without condescending to say one word to relieve my fears?" demanded Mrs. Delaney.

"I have nothing to add, madam, to what I before

stated," replied Denzil, coolly. "I am willing to make all due allowance for your maternal feelings," he added, after a considerable pause; "but, I really must confess, your present conduct seems to me most inconsistent with those principles which I have hitherto given you full credit for. Excuse me," he hastily added, observing the storm gathering on her brow, as she started from the languid position she had assumed on the sofa, upon which she had been seated. "Excuse me," he repeated, "I neither can nor will prolong this conversation."

He rang the bell violently as he spoke, and Ned instantly entered—

"Is Mrs. Delaney's carriage waiting?" he demanded.

Ned looked with surprise at the lady, who was now standing in the middle of the room, her softness and extreme sorrow all thrown aside, and her fine eyes sparkling with anger and resentment.

"No, sir," she observed, in a tone fully corresponding with her looks, "I have no carriage waiting—I came here in a *fiacre*, which I sent away, because I imagined myself secure that Mr. Montgomery possessed so much respect for me, and consideration for my feelings, that I should be sure of his attendance home—but it appears I deceived myself. You need not, however, alarm yourself, sir—I shall not longer intrude upon you—I can find my way home by myself, I dare say."

"You had better let my man get you a conveyance," observed Montgomery, coolly.

"I can get you a coach in a moment, ma'am," said Ned, with whom Mrs. Delaney was rather more a favourite than the rest of the family.

Mrs. Delaney threw herself on the sofa again, and

gave way to a still more violent hysteric than she had before played off.

Denzil's patience was now completely worn out—

"Send some of the females to her," he exclaimed to Ned, as he rushed out of the room, and retreated to his own chamber, where he continued until the lady, having thought proper to recover, accepted Ned's offer and departed in a *fiacre*.

"She is gone, sir," said Ned, putting in his head at the door, his wide mouth extended from ear to ear.

Montgomery could not help smiling at the expression of his countenance, but he had suffered too much serious vexation to be in a very risible mood, and was quite unwilling to gratify Ned's curiosity by relating what had been the cause of the strange scene he had witnessed; he therefore desired him to depart, and not to intrude upon him until he found it necessary to call for his attendance.

CHAPTER XI.

——— If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride,
And hug it in my arms.——SHAKSPEARE.

AMIDST the various subjects which occupied Denzil Montgomery's attention, after the departure of Mrs. Delaney, that which most painfully affected him, next to the agonising uncertainty which he still suffered respect-

ing his mother, was the consideration of what would be the opinion of his friends in England on this affair, should it not prove fatal to him; and what would be their affliction, should he fall a victim?

"Always act with strict honour yourself, and keep no company but such as are guided by the same principle," observed Mr. Levison to him, on the eve of his departure, "and there will then be no fear of your ever being engaged in what are miscalled, affairs of honour." How little did he then foresee (thought Denzil) as he recalled this observation to his memory—how little could he then anticipate, that the pupil on whose prudence and conduct he so confidently relied, would so soon be compelled to engage in what he had then joined in strongly condemning?

"At least," he reflected, "they shall know the truth, and judge how far I am to be condemned, as having provoked this affair."

Influenced by these thoughts, he sat down and wrote a distinct narrative of the whole affair to Mr. Levison, at the same time detailing the discovery he had made relative to his mother, and her letter to him, warning him of the designs of the Delaneys; and, in conclusion, he pathetically entreated Mr. Levison to rescue this unfortunate woman from her present degradation and distress.

"I have not presumed," he remarked, "formally to bequeath the sum, which your generosity placed at my disposal; but I am certain that, in leaving it in your hands, you will act towards her as it was my intention to do—namely, to secure her from future fears of want, and remove her beyond the reach of temptation to do evil. It may be supposed that I can have but little regard for a

parent who seems to have deserted me in infancy, to embrace a life of misery and disgrace; but my heart yearns towards her with a feeling I cannot describe, and, at this moment, I feel as if I could welcome death, could I but see her restored to comfort and respectability, for Fanny's sake, if not for mine—but I will not urge another word—It would be an insult to you, could I for a moment suppose that you would hesitate to rescue her from such wretchedness as she is now, I fear, suffering. Should I fall, (and if I do not fall, this letter will not come to your hands), that wretchedness will be aggravated tenfold; and I earnestly, solemnly implore you, to lose no time in hastening to her relief."

The painful task of writing this last expression of his feelings and wishes was scarcely completed, before Mr. Drennan, accompanied by the friend he had spoken of, entered the room.

"Allow me, Mr. Montgomery, to introduce to you Mr. St. George," observed Mr. Drennan. "I have already explained to him the circumstances which will render his assistance desirable to you; but as your account of the affair may somewhat differ from mine, it will be as well, probably, that I leave you together, and he and I will afterwards settle the necessary arrangements. I shall see you," addressing Mr. St. George, "in about an hour—you know the place of appointment?"

Mr. St. George assented, and Denzil and he were left alone together.

There was nothing very imposing in the appearance of Mr. St. George, who was a plain, sickly-looking young man, with an expression of countenance particularly mild and gentle. Denzil, however, felt rather embarrassed at

being thus left to detail to a stranger the unpleasant circumstances which had arisen, and for some moments he remained silent.

Mr. St. George at length spoke. "You have been writing, I see," he observed, with the tone and familiarity of an old acquaintance. "I hope you do not think it necessary to be making your last will and testament!"

"I have thought it necessary to guard against the worst possible result," replied Denzil.

"Then you are determined to fight?" said Mr. St. George, smiling.

"I shall have no option," returned Denzil; "for I cannot, nor will not make any concession, when I feel that I am in the right."

"That is bravely determined," replied St. George; "but do you really think that matters will be carried to such an extremity. For my own part, I acknowledge I do not think that Dennis Delaney will stand fire—I know but little of him, to be sure; but of this I am certain, that, though he never yet lacked resolution to commit a bad action, he has always wanted courage to defend it."

"Indeed!" replied Denzil, "I should not have suspected that—for Mr. Delaney always appeared to me a firm, determined character, much more so than his son, whose bluster I have often thought was more in sound than reality."

"I could give you some striking proofs that the father's determination has as little foundation as the son's fierceness and assumption," returned St. George. "There is but one point on which he is determined, and that is—to make all he can, out of the fools whom his

plausible and specious manner enables him to impose upon. You blush at the word 'fools,' Mr. Montgomery, but when I tell you that I have been so imposed upon, and have been a sufferer to a much greater extent than you, I hope, have been—you will not be angry at my using that epithet."

"Certainly not," replied Denzil, "nor, indeed, ought I under any circumstances, without I acknowledged myself to——"

"Oh, then, you do not admit that you have been taken in by him?" interrupted St. George; "but probably you may find that you are in for it much deeper than you suspect."

"Let me be in as deep as I may," returned Denzil, smiling, "a pistol ball may soon wipe off the score."

"He won't fight; I will bet you what you like, he never draws a trigger against you! It is all vapour and smoke—however, it is quite right that you should have some one on your side, to see fair play—for though Drennan would not let any thing very atrocious take place, he's too much in their interest to be a fair umpire. They will be rarely surprised," he added, with an air of exultation, "when they see me on the ground—for they will know, then, that their character is finally settled with you. But how long have you been acquainted with them? Not very long, I presume, from your disavowing that you have been *much* taken in."

Denzil related his encounter with the Delaneys at Dover, attempting to slightly pass by the fact that his first acquaintance with them had originated in his being enabled to confer a pecuniary favour on the head of the family; but Mr. St. George was too shrewd not to

discover that there was something in the back-ground, and his questions elicited from Denzil the whole affair.

He laughed so heartily at the recital, that Denzil felt half-inclined to be angry——

"Forgive me, my dear sir," he at length observed; "but I cannot help being diverted at the thought of your benevolent compassion, and attention to the feelings of the ladies—but it is almost time I attended my appointment with Drennan, and I must therefore postpone, until a future opportunity, returning your confidence by relating my adventures in connexion with the same respectable and amiable family—only thus far I will tell you:—that I, too, have been the happy man destined to receive the fair hand of Miss Julia Delaney, but that I had not half your wisdom, for I eagerly caught at the bait, and was for six weeks desperately in love with her. Why I did not become her husband, shall be a tale for another time. Adieu, *au revoir*."

Again was Denzil left to his own meditations—but it was not for long, for Mr. St. George speedily returned.

"You must be ready at five to-morrow morning, in the Bois de Boulogne. Mr. Dennis Delaney is quite intractable, and you must meet."

"I shall be ready," replied Denzil.

"And, in the mean time, how will you dispose of yourself?" inquired St. George; "it will not be wise to sit down to meditate on the friends you have left behind, or any other equally *entertaining* subject, which can only serve to depress your spirits and unnerve you. You had better accompany me to the Theatre, and drive away thought."

"I am not anxious to drive away thought," replied Denzil; "on the contrary, I have many subjects to which I

am anxious to give all possible attention, lest I should omit doing that which I may have no opportunity afterwards of repairing."

"Well, then, I will not interrupt you," returned St. George, "and indeed I must go to the Comedie Francaise —for there is a female friend of mine to make her first appearance—but are you provided with pistols?—if you are not, I have an excellent pair at your service."

"I have a pair," said Denzil, "but I can say nothing as to their excellence, for I have never tried them, and, indeed, scarcely looked at them since they were purchased for me."

"It is highly necessary, then, they should be looked at," observed St. George, coming back into the room.

Denzil rang for Ned, and desired him to bring the pistols, which had never been taken out of the travelling-case.

"The—the what, sir?" stammered Ned, his florid colour fading to deadly white, as his eyes glanced from his master to the stranger.

"The pistols, you blockhead!" said Denzil, in an unusually impetuous tone.

Ned retreated with evident dismay, but it was not until he returned, that Denzil, whose thoughts were occupied with other subjects, discovered the terror that had taken possession of the senses of his servant.

"You need not be alarmed, Ned," he observed, "this gentleman is a friend, and is not come here on any hostile errand."

"I hope not," said Ned, bluntly, "but I donna like such deadly weapons!"

"Nor do I, my friend, I assure you," said St. George, smiling, "I never look at them, or handle them, without

feeling a sort of nervous trepidation; but I must conquer these fears now, for I want to see whether these are worth any thing."

"They cost a power o' money, and they're none the worse for wear, for they've never been used," said Ned, his countenance brightening at the discovery, which he believed he had made, that the stranger only wanted to purchase the pistols; and, emboldened by his master's silence, he launched forth most eloquently in the praise of the workmanship, and repeated several times, with great emphasis, that they were quite "spick and span new." Mr. St. George appeared greatly entertained with Ned's dialect and simplicity; and, fully comprehending the mistake he had fallen into, he confirmed it by undervaluing the pistols, though at the same time, he took care to hint to Denzil that they would answer his purpose.

"We will go out in the morning and try them," he observed; "and if they answer, I will not mind giving for them double what they cost."

This observation, which was intended to lull Ned's suspicions, completely answered the purpose; and he employed himself, after Mr. St. George's departure, in rubbing and polishing the pistols—not, however, without secretly wondering why his master should wish to part with them.

The night passed mournfully and heavily away with Denzil—the veil which passion and worldly feelings had thrown over the transaction in which he was about to engage, seemed withdrawn in the solitude of night, and he beheld, in all its features of horror and deformity, the savage custom with which he was about to comply.

A Bible, which had been the gift of Miss Rachel, and

which always was placed on his dressing-table, met his sight; but he dared not seek in its sacred pages that comfort which, amid the storm of other feelings, he had frequently found there. The prayer which half rose to his lips was suppressed—for he dared not with vile mockery address his Creator, at the very moment that he was preparing to act in open defiance of his laws.

The morning broke, and found him sleepless, pale, and agitated. He drew aside the window-curtain which impeded the entrance of the first rays of the sun——

"It may be the last time I am destined to behold this glorious sight!" he observed. At that moment he beheld a person slowly walking along the opposite side of the street into which he was looking, and as the individual drew nearer, Denzil discovered that it was Mr. St. George. He was about to depart from the window, and prepare to receive him, when he was surprised by observing that he passed on, without seeming to notice the house.

Denzil soon, however, discovered that he had gone forward to meet another person, who was advancing from the other end of the street, and they now stood in earnest conversation together. It was too far distant for Denzil accurately to distinguish who this other person was, but the figure, manner, and appearance all strongly suggested to him that it was the very person he was so anxious to see—the mysterious being who had first disturbed his happiness, and who, he feared to find, was now but too closely connected with him. It was, in fact, the brother-in-law of Mr. Delaney, the father or reputed father of his (Denzil's) unhappy mother.

He darted down stairs, the moment the thought occurred to him; but, though he was breathless with haste,

when he reached the street, the object of his anxiety was gone, and St. George was returning alone towards the hotel.

"Who was that?—excuse me, if I appear impertinent! —who was the man with whom you have just parted? I have the most pressing, the most important reasons for wishing to know!"

Mr. St. George looked surprised, "That person," he replied, "was an unfortunate countryman of mine—one who has——but I do not know that I am at liberty to answer your question. He has some *important reasons* for wishing to remain concealed, and as those may be connected with your important reasons for wishing to know who he is—and as I am under some obligations to him——"

"Be assured," exclaimed Denzil, interrupting him, "that my motives are not unfriendly to him! But, if it be the person that I suspect it is, he has it in his power to explain a mystery, and to remove doubts, which render my life a misery——"

"But, my dear sir, do you recollect that it now wants but a very short time of a period much more important to you than the explanation of any mysteries?" said St. George. "Let that affair be got over, and I will then do all in my power to satisfy you, respecting O'Bryen."

"O'Bryen!" repeated Denzil, hastily; "that is something gained—for I have never before been able to learn by what name he was distinguished. But is it, after all, the same person? You can at least answer that question. Is O'Bryen the brother of Mrs. Delaney?"

"I cannot positively say," replied St. George, "and

yet I rather suspect you are right. He is, I know, somehow allied to them, though I did not know what relationship existed; but it strikes me, from many circumstances, that you are right—and principally because there is a very striking resemblance between Mrs. Delaney and O'Bryen's daughter, though the latter has been much handsomer than——"

"His daughter!—Do you then know his daughter?" exclaimed Denzil, in a faltering voice.

"Yes, I do know her—but, my good friend, what is the meaning of this violent agitation?" returned Mr. St. George. "O'Bryen's daughter is now neither young nor handsome, though she has been eminently so."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Denzil, impatiently, "it is not that—I spoke not of her in that light!—But is she ——what is her situation in life? is she——"

He paused, unable to finish the sentence, and St. George, with increasing surprise, repeated—

"Her situation!—her situation is bad enough, and miserable enough, but not more so, I believe, than is generally the result of a youth of dissipation and——"

"That is enough! I am quite satisfied!" replied Denzil, in a faint voice; "but at a future time," he resumed, with more vivacity, "I will call upon you to fulfil your promise, and, if possible, procure me an interview with this unhappy woman."

"I cannot, for the life of me, imagine what interest you can have in these people," observed Mr. St. George, with increased curiosity, "but we will now turn our attention to the affair we have in hand—for we have but a few minutes to spare, over the time that it will take us to reach the spot appointed for the ren-

contre. Heaven send that it were well over, for I do not like these things, though one cannot live in the world without doing as the world does."

"It is a bad world! I care not how soon I leave it!" said Denzil, with bitterness, as he led the way to his apartment.

"And yet," returned St. George, with a sigh, "to judge from outward appearance, you have little to complain of. You have, to be sure, met with some bad specimens of the world, in these people; but should this affair terminate favourably, as I hope it may, it will teach you caution and distrust; and these two qualities, with a good income and a clear conscience, will make it——"

"Never—never!" interrupted Denzil, with emphasis, "but come, I am ready!"

They walked in silence to the place appointed, and were the first who reached it. Mr. Dennis Delaney, his friend Drennan, and a third person (a surgeon), almost immediately made their appearance.

It would have been very evident to an indifferent spectator, that the appearance of Mr. St. George, as the second of his antagonist, was neither expected or desired by Mr. Dennis Delaney, who seemed to regard him with no trifling degree of confusion; but Denzil was little disposed to make any observations. The repugnance he had felt, on principle, to engage in this contest, the tender and melancholy feelings which had arisen in his bosom at the thoughts of what his friends would suffer, should it prove fatal to him—even the natural fear which "flesh is heir to," at the near prospect of death, and which it must be confessed had at first some slight share in the sensations of our hero,—all had vanished, or, rather, all were

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CHAPTER XII.

> Gone from her cheek is the summer bloom,
> And her lip has lost all its faint perfume,
> And the gloss has dropped from her golden hair,
> And her cheek is pale, but no longer fair.
>
> BARRY CORNWALL.

MANY hours had elapsed before Denzil Montgomery awoke to a perfect recollection of what had taken place, and then it was to be convinced he still lived, by the endurance of the most acute bodily agony. The ball of his antagonist had lodged in his side, and the tortures he felt were occasioned by the efforts of the surgeons to extract it.

The operation was, at length, completely successful, and Denzil, in some measure relieved from the torture he had suffered, became capable of thought and reflection.

His first inquiries were as to the fate of Delaney, whom he recollected to have seen extended on the ground, at the moment when, after reeling some paces, he had himself fallen; and he heard, with great satisfaction, that the wound Mr. Delaney had received, was comparatively of trifling moment.

The positive orders of the surgeons prevented his asking any further questions, and he knew not, therefore, even where he was, though the poverty of the bed on which he was laid, and the meanness of the apartment, betrayed to him that he had not been conveyed to the hotel which he had left in the morning. He saw, how-

ever, with satisfaction, that his servants, Ned and Jacques, were in attendance, though the fright and consternation of the former evidently disqualified him from being either a very active or useful assistant.

The threats of the doctors, that he should be entirely excluded from the room, and not suffered to see his master at all, had operated so upon poor Ned, as to force him to suppress any noisy indication of his grief, which had at first been sufficiently tumultuous; but, though he was forbidden to give utterance to his feelings, his pale and lengthened visage, the convulsive wringing of his hands, and the efforts he made to suppress the groans which heaved his chest, were all distinctly visible to his master, who felt at once pained and pleased at these evidences of the poor fellow's attachment.

He would fain have called him to his bed-side and consoled him, but the surgeon, who sat attentively watching him, was peremptory in his commands that his patient should preserve the strictest silence, and Denzil, though scarcely conscious why he did so, yielded compliance.

The medicines which had been given to procure him repose, at length asserted their power, and he sank into a profound sleep.

The inquiries which his vigilant attention to the symptoms of his patient had hitherto delayed, were now made to Ned, by the surgeon, through the medium of Jacques; and he desired to be informed of the circumstances, situation in life, and friends of the sufferer; and the grief of poor Ned was with difficulty restrained from breaking out into loud lamentation, as he gave the necessary answers to the questions that were put to him.

"His master had neither father nor mother," he said; "but he had friends, who had been both father and mother to him, and who, he was sure, would break their hearts, if they could see him now dying in such a miserable place, and in such a manner."

"But has Mr. Montgomery no friends in Paris, who would take upon themselves to acquaint his relations in England with the affair that has taken place?" inquired the surgeon.

Ned shook his head, despondingly—"His master had no friends in this country," he replied. "Those who ought to be his friends, had turned out his bitterest foes, and as to sending a man off, though he shouldn't stand for the expense, for he knew they wouldn't begrudge a hundred pounds rather than his poor master should die without a friend near him—yet what would be the use of sending a blundering Frenchman, that couldn't make himself understood in England, and would perhaps never find them out?"

Monsieur Jacques, the interpreter, was violently offended at this imputation upon his knowledge of the English language, as he had previously insinuated to Ned the propriety of his being himself sent off as courier extraordinary to his master's friends in England; but the surgeon's smiles and his uplifted finger kept his resentment within bounds, and he proceeded with his difficult task of endeavouring to elicit from Ned the necessary directions to the persons of whom he spoke in England.

During the course of inquiry, Ned suddenly recollected that his master had written a letter on the preceding evening, which would supply all the necessary informa-

tion, as his learning was just sufficient to enable him to make out that it was intended for Mister, or, (as he called him) Squire Levison.

At his own suggestion, therefore, he was despatched to the Hotel where it had been left; but, as he was unable to read the writing contained in the unsealed paper in which this letter was enveloped, and which contained Denzil's directions to send the latter only in case of his decease, he very prudently (as he conceived) left that behind, not choosing, as he mentally observed, to expose any of his master's secrets to the meddling, officious Jacques, who had boasted that, though he spoke English but imperfectly, he could read it as well as he could his native tongue; which, by the by, was not very improbable, as Monsieur Jacques, with all his fluency and self-consequence, could in reality boast but little more learning than the rude ignorant English rustic, whom he affected so heartily to despise.

The inference which the doctor drew, therefore, when he saw, on Ned's return, that the letter was properly sealed and directed, was that Mr. Montgomery had intended it to have been sent; and having, therefore, written a succinct account of the present alarming, but, he trusted, not hopeless situation of his patient, he enclosed Denzil's letter in his own, and sent it off by a special courier, according to the address, long before Denzil awoke from the slumber which art and the exhaustion of long suffering had created.

For some hours the symptoms of the sufferer were favourable, but no sooner did his mind resume its full powers, than the remembrance of all that had combined to distress and irritate, seemed to return with fresh force.

He became restless and feverish; and when the medical attendant, who had ventured to leave him for a few hours, returned in the evening, he found him in a complete state of delirium.

Several days passed away, and Denzil Montgomery hovered between life and death. Ned, who, after the first ebullition of terror and grief had subsided, had recovered his activity and usual carefulness and attention, was never absent from the bed-side of his suffering master; and he found an able assistant in the person of a woman whom the doctor introduced as a nurse, and who, from her thoroughly comprehending the English language, though she could speak but little of it, was a complete treasure to the afflicted domestic, who could pour out to her those complaints which he would otherwise have been obliged to confine to his own bosom; and was compelled, as he beheld her sympathising tears and sighs, which were the only replies beyond a few broken sentences which she occasionally uttered, to acknowledge that there was one good heart out of England.

Nothing, indeed, could exceed the tender care and assiduity of Marguerite (for so she was called;) her whole thoughts and attention seemed absorbed in her patient, and for nights and days she hung over him, or knelt by his bed-side, neglecting even necessary nourishment, and insensible, apparently, to weariness or fatigue, but listening with the most intense interest to the wild ravings, or shedding tears of pity at the murmured complainings of the invalid.

In the height of his delirium, Denzil would sometimes address her as his beloved Fanny — at one moment

pouring forth effusions of the most passionate love, and then, with apparent remorse, entreating her to forget the guilty passion which had undone him.

"I try to think of you as my sister," he would exclaim, "I try to forget that I have ever indulged another feeling; but I cannot—I cannot—it is too deeply buried in my heart!"

At other times he would fancy that it was his mother who watched beside his pillow, and, in the most pathetic terms, he would entreat her never again to desert him—never to return to those who had estranged her heart from her children, from virtue, and from peace.

"I shall never be happy in this world!" he once remarked, with a heavy sigh; "but it would relieve my heart of its heaviest burthen, could I but restore you to comfort, to self-esteem! I would fly with you to the other end of the world—surely, we might find some spot, where your unhappy story has never been disclosed, and where we might linger out the remainder of our lives in obscurity—where no one could reproach me with the disgrace of my birth! But I will not reproach you—you feel, I know you feel, how deeply you have injured yourself and me—and my father, too—where is he; why does he so long suffer you to lead such a life? Oh, I could curse him, but I dare not—I dare not! oh no, he is the father of Fanny, too—that angel, whom I must never, never again behold!"

It was on such occasions as these, that the tender and compassionate feelings of Marguerite were most conspicuous—though she seemed desirous to suppress their appearance; but Ned's wonder at her excessive emotion subsided, when in broken words, between sighs and

tears, she informed him that she had herself lost a son under very peculiar circumstances, and that Mr. Montgomery bore a strong resemblance to her beloved William.

"William! that is an English name," observed her sympathising auditor.

"Yes," she replied, "his father—his father was an Englishman."

"And is he dead, too?" inquired Ned.

"Yes—no—I cannot say—he left me to——to," she added, after a long pause, "to misery and disgrace."

"Then he was a rascal!" said Ned, with energy, "and I would scorn to own him as my countryman, even amongst the savages in America."

The loud tone in which he had given utterance to his indignation, had roused the invalid from the lethargy into which he had sank, after his previous exertion; and Marguerite, apparently reproaching herself, even for this temporary indulgence of her own feelings, flew to the bed-side to inquire, in a soft whisper, if he would take any thing.

"I thank you," replied Denzil, in a faint voice, but with more appearance of recollection than he had for some days shewn; "I am very thirsty!—But who is here? I thought I heard voices talking, and fancied it was some one very dear to me—but my head is very confused, and I believe I have had a long and painful dream."

"Thank God, you are better! I know you are better, sir!" exclaimed Ned, hastily unclosing the bed curtain, and thus throwing a strong light on the features of Marguerite, who was now holding the cup with drink close to her patient.

uttered it, but Marguerite, who sank fainting behind the pillow.

"Poor thing! she is quite worn out with fatigue," said the surgeon in a compassionate tone, and hastening to her relief.

Ned, whose joy at seeing Mr. Levison had rendered him nearly powerless, now recollected himself; and, by their united exertions, Marguerite was removed to an outer room, and left to the care of the poor people who inhabited the cottage, while Mr. Levison, whose attention had been too much engrossed by the situation of Denzil to pay much regard to the temporary bustle that had taken place, had now seated himself by the bed-side.

"Do you know me, my dear boy?" he demanded, as Denzil's hollow eyes were turned with a look of earnest inquiry towards him.

"I should believe you are my best friend," he replied, with hesitation, "but my poor weak brain has so often deceived me lately, that I can scarcely credit anything."

"You may believe it is one who has ever acted with the best intentions towards you, Denzil," said Mr. Levison, kindly taking his hand, which he now extended towards him, "though I have been mistaken—sadly mistaken—and my folly has cost you your life! Oh, Denzil, I shall never never forgive myself! Had I acted as I ought to have done, you might now have been in health—the prop of my old age! But a prejudice—a foolish mistaken pride—prevented my doing you justice, and my poor girl, too—and sent you here, to be murdered."

He hid his face with his hands for some moments, and

remained silent, while Denzil, from weakness and agitation, was unable to utter that consolation which he would have given.

"And now what prospect have I?" resumed Mr. Levison, raising his voice. "The boy that I cherished as my own, and for whom I sacrificed your happiness, has ungratefully deserted me—and has, by this time, I suppose, married a young giddy jilt!—But, no matter, he shall never have a farthing of my money—all that I can cut him off from, I will—he may depend on it; and if her mother acts towards them, as I hope she will, we shall then make them bitterly repent their folly and duplicity. But I am tiring you, my good lad, with my troubles," he continued, "though I know you will be sorry to hear that your friend Charles has acted so shamefully. Ah, Denzil, he never was like you! And to think how cruelly I have acted towards you—blighting your prospects, and driving you upon the world, to meet such a premature—but there is a hope that you may recover, my dear boy—I am sure you look better since I have come in, and I have brought two good nurses with me—my sister and Fanny are both come; and you know what good nurses they are! You have often said, you know, that Fanny——"

"I have had a very diligent and tender nurse," interrupted Denzil, in a tumult of agitation, and I should be very sorry——

He paused, unable to finish the sentence.

"Sorry!" repeated Mr. Levison, in a tone of surprise, half mingled with resentment; but this was instantly changed into feelings of alarm—for the temporary excitement felt by Denzil had subsided, and left him in a state

of exhaustion, which appeared, to the alarmed Levison, the forerunner of immediate dissolution.

His loud exclamations brought the surgeon and the affrighted Ned into the room, but it was long before the object of their solicitude recovered from the deep swoon into which he had fallen; and when he did so, all traces of sense or recollection seemed to have forsaken him, and he resumed those delirious ravings which had all along characterised his illness.

From a wild tumultuous dream, or rather what had appeared to him a dream, Denzil awoke to find his bed surrounded by those whose names had been perpetually on his lips, but of whose presence he had hitherto been unconscious.

Mr. Levison was seated by the side of the bed—Miss Rachel was busily employed in some kind office at the farther side of the chamber—and at the foot of the bed stood Fanny; but so altered, that Denzil gazed on her for some moments, in doubt whether he beheld a real being of flesh and blood.

The lustre had faded from her eye, the colour from her cheek, and her fixed look and attitude gave her the appearance of a marble statue.

The altered glance of Denzil's eye, as he gazed upon her, and the faint blush which suffused his pallid cheek, aroused her attention. She started, and, in a low voice, uttered a few words, which instantly brought Miss Rachel to his side.

Denzil feebly extended his hand to welcome her, and Fanny, bursting into tears, exclaimed——

"Thank Heaven! he does know us, at last."

Denzil's heart beat violently at the sound of that

beloved voice—but he believed that he was dying, and no feelings but those of pure unmixed joy, that he should resign his last breath in the arms of his dearest friends, now reigned in his bosom.

From this hour, however, Denzil began to amend; the fever had passed its crisis, and in a few days he was sufficiently recovered to be removed to a commodious apartment, and to converse calmly and rationally with the attentive friends, who watched over him with the most incessant care and tenderness.

But, though Rachel's care left no wish ungratified, and though Denzil acknowledged with gratitude her attention and skill, he could not help recurring, with something like regret, to the absence of the gentle female who had watched over him during the first part of his illness.

From Ned he learned that Marguerite, or as he (Ned) called her, Marget, had been suddenly taken ill on the evening of Mr. Levison's arrival, and had returned to her own dwelling, which was at some distance; so far, indeed, that Ned had been unable to comply with her last request at parting, that he should from time to time call upon her, to let her know the state of his master.

"I don't think, by the by," observed Ned, "that the poor woman has ever been paid for the time she was here, and I believe she is very poor, though she seemed like one that had seen better days; and she is very proud-spirited, too—for when I offered, before she went, to speak to Mr. Levison about paying her wages, she wouldn't hear of it, but hurried away before I could get an opportunity to tell him that she had not been paid, though I dare say she wanted it bad enough, poor soul!"

This and other remarks made to his master, by Ned, when they were alone together, excited in Denzil an almost irrepressible desire to see the female who was the subject of them.

Romantic as it appeared, he could not divest himself of the suspicion that it was really his mother, whom, as Ned had informed him, he had often addressed as such.

The emotion she had displayed on those occasions—the tender care and intense anxiety which she had manifested towards him—the manner in which she had declined receiving a pecuniary recompence for her services—and, above all, her sudden illness and consequent retreat, upon the appearance of Mr. Levison, all seemed to confirm the belief, which was now deeply rooted in his mind.

He elicited from Ned that Mr. Levison had not seen her, or at least so transiently and indistinctly that it was unlikely he could recollect features which it was most probable he had not beheld for years, and which he could have had no expectation of beholding in such a place, and under such a character—in short, Denzil was determined to believe it was his mother; and the most trivial circumstances that could warrant the conviction, were by him converted into absolute proofs.

Oh, how bitterly and impatiently did he lament the weakness that still confined him to his couch, and rendered it impossible for him personally to fly to her, to assure her of his affection, and to rescue her from all fear of farther degradation and suffering.

The moment, however, he was able to hold a pen, he addressed to her the following letter, which Ned undertook to convey:—

"I know not how to address you—but my heart tells

me, that, if the obligations you have conferred on me were only the result of a kind and humane feeling, on your part, towards an unhappy sufferer—I am doing no more than my duty in thus expressing my warmest gratitude; but if, as I would fain persuade myself, there was another, a secret motive for the tenderness and anxiety with which you devoted yourself to soothe my sufferings and aid my recovery, I would implore you not to be kind by halves, but to finish the task you have begun, by relieving my mind from its present insupportable anxiety. If you are the person I suspect you to be, you will comprehend this, and devise some plan for satisfying the ardent and irrepressible desire I feel to see you—to assure you that I am and ever will be—I will say, your friend; you will know how to substitute another, a more expressive title—one which I will act up to in its fullest sense, even to renouncing all other ties, if you should require it. If you are not the person I suspect, you will not hesitate, I am sure, to come openly and convince me that I am mistaken, when I assure you that my peace of mind, my perfect restoration to health depends upon the elucidation of a mystery with which I cannot but connect your image; and, in the mean time, I entreat your acceptance of the enclosed, as a faint tribute of the gratitude I owe you."

The praises Ned had bestowed on the good nurse, to whose care he attributed the preservation of his master's life, had excited some curiosity to see and reward her, in the minds both of Mr. Levison and his sister and daughter; but as the former had learned from Mr. Labroisiere, the surgeon, that she still remained too unwell to resume her duties, he had satisfied himself by putting into the

surgeon's hands, what he considered a handsome reward for her services, and had thought no more about it; while Denzil, judging that it would (if she really was his mother) be her wish to conceal her present situation from Mr. Levison, cautioned Ned to say nothing to any one respecting Marguerite, which could excite any suspicion of her being more than she pretended to be—a hired attendant.

Rude and unpolished as this faithful servant was, in his appearance and manners, he was not without considerable acuteness and quickness of apprehension. The delirious ravings of Denzil had convinced him that there was a mystery connected with the birth of his master that pressed heavily on his mind, and the eagerness with which he questioned Ned respecting Marguerite—her looks, her words, her every action, betrayed to him the suspicions that had arisen in his master's mind.

It was sufficient to Ned that he was enjoined to secrecy, to induce him carefully to confine to his own bosom the observations he had made, and the errand with which he was entrusted; and in order that he might safely and secretly convey the letter to Marguerite, he framed a plan for his absence from his usual close attendance on his master, who was still unable to rise from his couch without assistance, and set out with pleased alertness to find the spot which Marguerite had indicated as her dwelling-place, leaving Jacques to supply the requisite attendance in the sick chamber, where, however, the almost constant presence of Mr. Levison or his sister, left little necessity for the services of any one else.

During the temporary absence of his usual companions, however, Denzil was left alone with Jacques, who profited

by the opportunity (the first, as he observed, he had found) to assure his master that he had never lost sight of the commission he had entrusted him with.

The important events which had since occurred, had nearly banished from Denzil's mind all recollection of the nature of this commission; but the volubility of Jacques did not leave him long in doubt, as he proceeded to relate at length the expedients he had adopted to discover the person about whom Monsieur had expressed so much curiosity and interest.

Denzil, however, could not learn that his boasted adroitness and perseverance had effected much towards his object. He had once, it appeared, according to his statement, actually fallen into company with the object of his search, at a cabaret, where the latter, whom he described as being under the influence of liquor, was engaged in conversation with one of his countrymen, who, as Jacques afterwards learned, was a servant of Mr. Delaneys; but, whether Jacques himself had, as was probably the case, partaken rather too largely of the brandy and water, which he described as being freely circulated among the company, or whether the man, who was the subject of his observation, really suspected him of sinister designs, it appeared that the latter had contrived to elude his vigilance, and get off without allowing him to learn any more respecting him than he before knew.

"I consoled myself, monsieur," he continued, "that, having discovered the name and rank of his associate, with whom he seemed on familiar terms, I should be able to elicit from him the information I wanted—but, *Morbleu*, when, on the following day, I waited upon *le*

garçon, at the hotel of Monsieur Delaney, the birds were gone—they had all quitted the city!"

"The Delaneys are gone, then?" said Denzil, who had hitherto heard nothing of his former friends, the very mention of whose name, when it had once or twice accidentally occurred, was sufficient to put Mr Levison into a passion.

From Jacques, however, he now heard that the wound Mr. Delaney had received, had been so slight as scarcely to confine him at all to the house; but that Miss Julia had thought proper, as the heroine of this tragedy, to be dangerously ill for more than a week. That the affair having, however, become the subject of great notoriety, and the real danger which Monsieur Montgomery was known to be in, being talked of publicly, Monsieur Dennis Delaney had thought it prudent to withdraw from Paris; and he had been rather abruptly and unexpectedly followed by the rest of the family, who, after engaging a splendid hotel for six months, had suddenly decamped, leaving behind them (as Jacques significantly observed) some substantial reasons for bemoaning their departure, among those tradespeople whom they had honoured with their commands.

A blush of shame, at the thought how intimately his name had been connected with these accomplished swindlers, crimsoned Denzil's cheek, as Jacques concluded his detail; but he was prevented making any observations by the entrance of Mr. Levison, and Jacques, not a little pleased at having (as he supposed) so easily convinced his master of his assiduity and attention, was soon after dismissed.

From the period of his arrival, to the present moment,

Mr. Levison, though scarcely able to bridle his natural impatience, and curiosity to converse on the events which had taken place since Denzil's departure from England, had been withheld, both by his own good sense and the doctor's representations, from introducing any subject into conversation, which could have the effect of reviving that mental excitement, which, as the latter observed, had operated much more forcibly than even the severe bodily wound he had received, in producing the disorder to which Denzil had so nearly fallen a victim; but Denzil's bodily strength was now every hour increasing, and though he was still melancholy, nay, sometimes absolutely gloomy, Mr. Levison considered that his mind had gained sufficient firmness to render it no longer hazardous to speak of subjects in which they were mutually interested.

After commenting, therefore, with evident pleasure, upon his amended looks, he continued—

"I little thought, my good lad, when I read your letter, which Dr. Labroisiere enclosed in his—not being able, I suppose, to comprehend your direction that it was only to be delivered in the event of your death——"

Denzil started—he had until that moment totally forgotten the letter he had written; and, indeed, had he before recollected it, he would have concluded that it was in the possession of his servant, who, he thought, would not venture to disobey his plain and positive injunction, that it was not to be sent unless his death was the result of the meeting which was then about to take place.

He uttered some expressions of surprise and regret that this injunction had not been attended to, and Mr. Levison proceeded—

"I do not ask of you, Denzil, to explain the strange and incoherent expressions you have used in that letter; but I wish to assure you, that had I long ago known in what manner or how I could benefit the unhappy woman you there speak of, I should have eagerly embraced it. I know and feel that, in one instance, I judged her wrongfully, and acted with a harshness that I have ever since repented; but she stood self-convicted of one offence, and it was but too natural that I should condemn her for all that she was accused of. She had brought indelible disgrace and infamy upon the name of Levison —a name which, until it was unhappily conferred on her, had never been associated with aught but what was honourable, and——"

Denzil's eyes, which had before been fixed on the ground, seemed to dart lightning as he raised them.

"Then she was married?" he exclaimed. "Forgive me, I ought not to rejoice, I know, but I thought—I feared——"

"Married—undoubtedly, she was married. Had she not been married, where would have been the crime, the guilt, which has driven her from society, which has made her an outcast—a beggar—a——but forgive me, my dear lad, I do not wish——I would not, for the world, wound those feelings of which, I much fear, she is totally unworthy. I forgot that it was your mother of whom I was speaking. Yes, yes, too surely she was the wife of one who generously overlooked all her deficiencies of birth and fortune, who raised her to rank and affluence, to meet with——Oh, heavens! with what a return? I shudder, even at this distance of time, to contemplate the dreadful picture—yet I still do, from my

soul, believe that she was less guilty than she appeared—than the world considered her! But, enough of this—we will not speak of what has passed—all I would say is, that I would willingly unite with you in any plan which could rescue her from want, from infamy—for infamy must be her lot, so long as she continues to blend her fate with the wretch whose horrible doctrines, and whose total want of feeling or principle, first seduced her into guilt, and who has only preserved his connexion with her for the wretched purpose of profiting by her——"

"Oh, heavens! do not go on!" exclaimed Denzil, with violent emotion, "my heart recoils from the picture—I have tried to believe her more unfortunate than guilty! But I *will* save her! yes, in spite of herself, I will rescue her from his contaminating influence! And yet I know not, at this minute—but a short time may perhaps reveal her to me—will induce her to acknowledge herself to me, and then I will see if he dare interpose his blighting, withering influence between a son and his mother!"

"There is but one way, Denzil, in which it strikes me you will be likely to succeed in detaching them from each other," replied Mr. Levison, calmly; "and that is, by making it worth his while to give her up entirely. Offer him a sufficient provision, on condition of his resigning her entirely to your care, and never again approaching her, and——"

Denzil half rose from the couch on which he was seated, while his eyes darted fire at the suggestion—

"Never! never!" he exclaimed, "sooner would I send a bullet through his black—his base heart! What,

reward him for seducing my mother?—for leading her into infamy?—No, no, I will try other means—she will not, I am sure she will not, remain deaf to the voice of reason and virtue! She will not, dare not, resist the entreaties of her son!"

He sank down, overpowered by the violent emotions that shook his weak frame; and Mr. Levison, in alarm, and blaming his own imprudence, flew to the bell, which instantly brought his sister and Fanny to his assistance.

Denzil had not, however, as Mr. Levison supposed, fainted—but his bodily strength was unequal to the agitation of his spirits. At sight of Fanny, whose looks bespoke unequivocally her terror, he made a strong effort to recover himself, and so far succeeded as to draw from aunt Rachel a reproof to her brother, for having so needlessly alarmed them.

"Look at Fanny," she observed, "the poor girl is ready to die with terror—I am sure she requires as much care and attention as Denzil himself, and yet she is everlastingly meeting with something or another to agitate and terrify her. Only an hour or two ago, she was frightened almost into convulsions by what a gipsy man, whom we met in our walk, said to her, and now——"

Denzil started.

"A gipsy man!" he repeated, darting a look of earnest inquiry at Fanny. No answering look met his eager gaze; but turning from his observation, she laid her head on her aunt's shoulder, and burst into tears.

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded Mr. Levison, who seemed to have been struck dumb for a time by his sister's speech. "Surely, my dear child," he

added, in a gentler tone, and with evident trepidation, "surely you cannot be so weak as to suffer the jargon of a vagabond, which has by chance, perhaps, happened to accord in appearance with reality——"

"Do not say any more about it, papa—I am weak, I know I am weak, but it was the sudden alarm of Denzil's illness, combined with——"

"With what?" said Mr. Levison, observing she hesitated, "with some predication of evil, I suppose, which was only made, I will venture to say, in revenge either for your seeming to despise his vocation, or from having been less generous to him than the rascal expected."

"No, no, no, indeed, papa," returned Fanny, with emphasis; "he was no common beggar, and he possessed —I know not how acquired—such knowledge of past events, that I could not help—but I will not talk of it, I will not think of it, if possible!"—and for the first time she raised her eyes to Denzil's, but they were instantly cast down, for they read there nothing but a confirmation of misery and despair.

"I *do* feel very unwell," she whispered to her aunt, "and I will go to my own room, if you will go with me."

"My dear, dear child!" exclaimed her aunt, "you tremble like a leaf. Brother, for goodness' sake, do not sit there like a statue—but ring the bell for Lucy, to assist this poor thing—for I am unable to support her."

Mr. Levison had indeed sat as immoveable as a statue, and as if totally abstracted from all that was passing around him. Even his sister's appeal was unheeded, until he saw Fanny, who could no longer command her overwrought feelings, sink lifeless from her aunt's feeble support.

"The villain has murdered my child!" he exclaimed, starting up as quickly as his infirmities would allow him, and hastening to obey Miss Rachel's command by ringing the bell with such violence that the room was soon filled with the anxious attendants of the house.

Fanny was conveyed to bed, and Mr. Levison, whose terror for her had absorbed every other feeling, now turned his attention to Denzil, who with acute but silent agony had witnessed this scene.

"What can be the meaning of this, Denzil?" he observed; "by what exaggerated tale has that villain (for that it was him, I have not the slightest doubt,) contrived thus to harrow the feelings of my poor girl?"

"Alas, it need not the aid of exaggeration," returned Denzil; "if he has told her the whole truth, it would fully account for the effect it has had upon her sensitive mind—coming, too, as I suppose it has, without the slightest preparation or suspicion on her part. Would to God that it had never been kept secret!—and yet I cannot but respect the motive."

"My motives *have* been good, Denzil," returned Mr. Levison, gravely, "though I see and feel now that I might have acted more wisely. It would have been far better that I should, from the first, have avowed your birth; but I feared that if she—if that man knew the claims they had on you, they would have employed that knowledge to your injury."

Denzil made no reply—he was pondering in his mind why the same motives did not operate to the concealment of Fanny's birth, and Mr. Levison proceeded, unheeded and uninterrupted, to utter his regrets at the untoward fate which seemed to pursue him, in thus always bringing

him within the influence of the wretch, who, like a malign planet, seemed to rule his destiny, and the destinies of all those who were dear to him.

Mr. Labroisiere, who had been summoned to attend Fanny, now entered the room, to allay her father's fears respecting her, and to ascertain the situation of Denzil, who, from the interest she had betrayed during the most critical parts of his disorder, he concluded was likely to feel a similar interest for her.

He first assured Mr. Levison that there was nothing to apprehend from his daughter's illness, which merely arose from natural excitement, and which her own good sense and naturally excellent constitution would soon, with rest and quiet, effectually remove—

"But it is a different case with you, my dear sir," he observed, after feeling Denzil's pulse, "and I really must protest against this indulgence of feelings and passions, which, operating on a frame so enervated as yours, will prove highly dangerous. It is not my province," he continued, addressing Mr. Levison, "to inquire how far it is necessary that Mr. Montgomery should be exposed tc these violent agitations—but if it is possible, by any means, to avoid them, I should strongly recommend it In fact," he added, in a lower tone, "the consequences will yet, in all probability, prove fatal to him, if——"

"God forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, with emphasis; "I hope and trust he will yet live many, many happy years, and my poor girl, too."

"He must submit, then, to my restrictions," observed Mr. Labroisiere, "and refrain from all conversation or reminiscences, which can tend to disturb that serenity which is absolutely essential to his recovery. Why do

you shake your head so mournfully, my dear sir?" he observed, addressing Denzil, whose involuntary gesture betrayed how little hope he entertained of being able to attain the state of mind which the good doctor recommended. "It is impossible, as I before said, for me to judge precisely of the causes that operate so unfriendly towards you—but I should hope, with such friends around you, so unaffectedly solicitous for your welfare—one, above all," he added, in a low voice, observing that Mr. Levison's attention was at the moment absorbed by some other thought, "who would scarcely suffer me to make the necessary inquiries respecting her own disorder, so anxious was she that *you* should have the benefit of my attendance and advice—I should think, I say——"

"Forbear—pray forbear!" interrupted Denzil, in agony; "you are wounding me to the quick——I dare not think—I dare not indulge a thought——Oh no—better, far better would it be that my life should be the sacrifice—that I should die, rather than——"

"Hush! hush! hush!" interrupted Mr. Labroisiere, "I must not suffer this—I will not speak another word to you, my dear sir, but I must see you instantly put to bed, and you must take something to allay this irritation and procure you repose. Shall I summon your servant to assist you?"

The recollection of the errand on which Ned had been sent, had wholly escaped from the recollection of Denzil, and the subject was not likely to tranquillise his mind; yet he felt any certainty was preferable to suspense; and he therefore consented to follow the advice of the doctor, in order to get rid of him, and be enabled to see Ned alone.

Every moment now seemed an hour to his impatience; but at length he came, and his significant look told Denzil, even before he spoke, that his errand had not been in vain.

"She will come!—*Marget*, that is to say, the—the ——lady," he added, after a moment's hesitation, "she will come to you herself, if we can contrive to get my old master out of the way, so that he won't see her—I know what she meant, though she didn't exactly say so to me—but you will see all about it in her letter. Poor thing! my very heart ached for her, while she was writing it! She looked so sorrowful, and the tears dropped so fast on the paper, they blotted out the words as fast as she wrote them; then she is so poor, and it is such a wretched place too! And that old man—I don't know what he is to her, whether he's a relation or not—but she seems to be deadly afeard of him! He came in, just as I was coming away, and he scowled at me outrageously. I don't know what she said to him, for it was all in French, though she's no Frenchwoman, by the by, she owned that to me, when she was talking about you; but I saw her give him the money you sent, and that made a wonderful alteration in his manners—for he asked me to sit down and take a glass of wine with him, and seemed quite disappointed that I would not—but I knew you would be quite *unpatient*, and so I hurried away."

During this tedious harangue, Ned had been fumbling first in one pocket and then in the other, without success, for the letter, which Denzil was dying with impatience to get into his possession.

From amidst a farrago of miscellaneous articles, of which no one but the owner could possibly understand

I had not—but you know I *did* point to the precipice on which you were standing——Forgive me, I am still wandering from that which ought now to occupy my sole attention. Can you doubt my wish to see you, to hear you express those feelings of affection and interest for my unhappy fate? But I have heard you—oh, yes, when you knew not that she was near, I have heard you call upon your mother, your unfortunate mother, and entreat her to seek an asylum with you, from the miseries and disgrace she was enduring! and they are miseries, heaven knows! But what am I to do? I cannot leave *him!* Oh, no, how can I now desert him! The infirmities of old age, rendered worse by his habits of intemperance, are rendering him every day less able to exert himself. The world has deserted him, and could I now leave him—a prey to poverty, remorse,—to all the evils which must result from such a life as his has been? You would not wish it, I am sure you would not!"

Denzil threw down the letter in a tumult of rage and astonishment—

"And is it, then, to me she dares address this language?" he exclaimed. "Is it to a son, that a mother pleads for the wretch who seduced her from the paths of virtue, who has imprinted on her offspring the indelible marks of infamy and shame? But I will see her—I will open her eyes to the delusion that infatuates her—that induces her to consider that as a duty which is adding every hour to her crime."

The excessive agitation and disappointment he felt, prevented him, for many hours, from reading the remainder of the letter, which, however, contained nothing more than an assurance that the writer would be most

happy and willing to see him, if she could do so without danger of meeting with Mr. Levison, which, she observed, she dreaded more than death; "though there is little fear," she added, "that he would recognise, in my now faded form, the once-admired Elinor Levison. How many years," she concluded, "have elapsed since I wrote that name—a name which, until I bore it, was honoured and respected."

CHAPTER XIII.

O life, thou art a galling load,
A long, a rough, a weary road
To wretches such as I!
Dim-backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through,
Too justly may I fear.——BURNS.

SEVERAL days passed, without either Denzil or his sole counsellor (Ned) being able to devise any means by which the former could hope to be able to gratify his ardent desire of seeing his mother.

Fanny's continued indisposition, which, however, was evidently occasioned less by bodily than mental ailment, kept Mr. Levison and his sister both prisoners to the house; but, in the mean time, Denzil's health and strength were rapidly improving. His mother had, through Ned, who saw her daily, given her solemn promise that she would not quit Paris, or in any way withdraw herself

she think that the occasion of my apparently foolish excursion so nearly concerns herself!"

The carriage stopped at the door of one of those large wretched habitations which can only be found in the suburbs of Paris. Capacious and substantial enough, in its primitive erection, to have been the residence of wealth and luxury; but appearing infinitely more gloomy and wretched than a humbler dwelling, from its union with poverty, dirt, and misery.

Denzil shuddered as he passed up the large and dark stone staircase. Several heads were put out from the innumerable doors which opened upon it, and he shuddered still more at the faces which glanced upon him—all seemingly in expectation that his visit was intended to them; but Ned still continued to ascend, and it was not till they reached the last landing, that he pointed to a door and whispered—

"That is *her* place."

Denzil could scarcely speak, but he ordered Ned to go down stairs, and wait for him; and then, with a trembling hand, knocked at the door.

A confused noise, which he had at first heard, ceased for a moment, and a shrill voice called "*Entrez.*"

Denzil lifted the latch, but he was about to retreat, from the belief that Ned had mistaken the room; for, instead of the deserted and gloomy place he had anticipated, and instead of the mourning and solitary inhabitant he expected to meet, he beheld a table covered with bottles and glasses occupying nearly the whole of the middle of the room, which certainly, in every other respect, was wretched and miserable enough. Around this table were seated four or five men, whose noisy conversation

Denzil's unexpected appearance seemed to have suspended. A female, who was sitting on a low stool at the fire-side, instantly started up—uttered a faint scream, and flew to Denzil. It was his mother!—but what a place to meet her in!

She understood the look he cast around him, and, quitting him for a few moments, she went to one of the men whose face, as he reclined upon a bench, was turned from the door.

With difficulty she made him understand the few words which, in an agitated tone, she uttered. He made an effort to rise, glanced round with a stupid, half-comprehending look at Denzil, and then, addressing his companions as "*Bon garçons mes amis*," he proposed that they should adjourn to some place he mentioned, adding, in what he intended a whisper, but which was sufficiently audible for Denzil to hear, that his daughter had a visitor of consequence.

The *bon garçons* arose, bowed with the greatest politeness to the lady, and with a significant smile, for which Denzil felt as if he could have felled them to the earth, wished him a good evening.

Denzil was now left alone with his mother—but the romantic feeling, the enthusiastic fervour, which had warmed his heart towards her, had subsided. He had believed her degraded and distressed—but he had fancied her shrinking, even in her distress and degradation, from the glaring face of day,—as hiding herself from the world except when forced into it, but here—here he found her witnessing, if not sharing in the noisy revels of her debauched companion—unshrinkingly exposing herself to the gaze of a set of wretches, whose very looks were contamination.

For some moments both preserved silence—Denzil glanced around the apartment, and then ventured to fix his eyes on that countenance which he had so long, so ardently wished to see. He beheld a woman scarcely past the middle age, but faded evidently more by care than time; her features were still eminently beautiful, and her form still retained its symmetrical proportions; but her eyes were sunken—and though they now shone with almost preternatural brightness, it was evidently under the influence of extraordinary excitement—and it was heightened, too, by the deep flush, which rendered the rouge that loaded her cheek unnecessary and useless at the present moment.

Her dress, though gaudy as to its general effect, was composed of the most paltry materials; and her whole appearance was such as Denzil would, had he casually met her in his walks, have turned from with pity and disgust, under an impression that she was a victim and a votary of vice and dissipation.

"You have come at an unfortunate moment," she observed in a trembling voice, "my unhappy father——"

"Your father!" exclaimed Denzil, starting.

"Yes—that was my father," she replied; "did you not recognise him? But I do not wonder that you did not—for he has been drinking incessantly, since he got the money you sent, and it makes him——" She burst into tears, unable to proceed.

"There is one question—forgive me, if I solemnly implore you to answer me with sincerity—Is that man your *father?*—I mean, is your father the only companion you have?—The—the person of whom you have all along spoken—to whom you have alluded——"

"Certainly," she exclaimed, with a look of extreme surprise. "To whom—what did you think? Surely—surely——oh, my son, my child—did you, could you think——"

She threw herself into his arms, in a transport of tears and grief, and Denzil pressed her with fervour to his bosom.

"My mother, my dear mother!" he exclaimed. "Oh, what a load, what a burthen you have taken off my mind! I knew not that it was your father—your *real* father, who was your companion, though I heard *him* speak of his Elinor—of his daughter. But my senses were dulled by a misapprehension that I now blush to recal to my mind—Oh, no, let his faults be what they may, he is still your father, and he must be provided for—his comforts must be attended to. Heaven forbid that I should wish to prevent your fulfilling so sacred a duty! Oh, my mother, these are tears of joy, of pride, at finding that your heart is so susceptible of that feeling of filial duty——"

"Which has been my ruin!" she exclaimed, with vehemence; "yes, to him I may attribute my present condition—it is for him that I have become the wretch—the miserable wretch you behold me! To his pernicious councils are to be attributed all my faults, my errors, my crimes! But for him I should now be innocent and happy, and you would never have lived to blush for your mother! You start, my child—but if you have heard, as I imagine you have, all the particulars of my unhappy history from Mr. Levison, you must have heard that it was to that man whom I unfortunately call my father—that it was to his importunities, his cruelly exercised authority, that I

yielded, when I became the wife of that generous, that ill-requited man, whose honour and—whose life," she added, in a deep and hollow tone, "were sacrificed—cruelly, basely sacrificed! Think, my child, what must be my feelings, to live in constant, in daily, nay, hourly association with one whose hands are stained with the blood of his friend—of his benefactor—of my husband!!! Yes, he was my husband—a kind, a generous, a devoted husband, to the wretch who had deceived him, who had given to his arms a——"

"Of whom—of what do you speak?" exclaimed Denzil, in amazement. "I know not to what you allude, or what horrible mystery there is yet for me to learn! But there is one question which I am upon the rack to have answered, though, without a farther explanation, I shall be still deeper involved in the labyrinth of doubt and mystery, which seems to envelope me still closer at every step of this strange story."

"And what is that?" she demanded, looking earnestly at him.

Denzil hesitated.

"You will remember that you told me," he observed, in a faltering voice, "that I must regard the daughter of him, whom I have ever looked upon as my father by adoption, as my sister—and I have tried to believe you, and to consider her as such; yet, if she is his daughter, who am I? and for what reason am I considered and treated as an alien?"

"She is not his daughter," she replied. "What have been his motives for calling her such, I know not—but she has no more claim upon him than you have. She is your sister—born at the same time with you, and there-

fore, if possible, more dearly and nearly connected with you——"

Denzil started up, and traversed the room in an agony which his mother could not misapprehend, and which she feared to increase by any further observation.

"But, if I understood you aright," he observed, suddenly stopping before her, "Mr. Levison has no right to the title of parent——"

"Certainly not," she replied, with firmness. "Mr. Levison has no claim upon you or your sister, but those which his unexampled generosity and benevolence have given him. You were left helpless, deserted, and disgraced by the errors of your unhappy mother, and the cruelty of your father, to the misery of a merciless world. Your mother he would have pursued even to death—for he believed her guilty of a deed, at which her nature shuddered—which she even now shudders to recal to her memory; but appearances were against me—I felt they were strongly, dreadfully arrayed to condemn me—and I trembled to encounter the ordeal of an appeal to justice. Alas, even now, even at this distance of time, I am not safe, should he discover me! He believes me not only an adulteress, but a murderer. Oh, my child, need I say to you that I never deserved the last imputation? No, at that dreadful moment, when I beheld my husband a lifeless corpse, and him—that man—I will not call him my father—coolly, deliberately viewing the horrid spectacle——I was innocent of all participation in the crime—except that of being a senseless beholder of the tragic scene!"

The truth instantly flashed upon Denzil's mind—the tale which he had heard so often alluded to, but never

perfectly explained, respecting the shut-up apartment at the Hall, which the old servants avoided with such mysterious shudderings, and the melancholy which had often stolen over Mr. Levison's features, when speaking of the events which had occasioned his taking possession of the seat of his ancestors, all rushed at once into his memory. And it was the heroine of that tragic tale that now stood now before him?—It was his mother—whom he had heard the old housekeeper at the Hall once upbraid with the epithets of an ungrateful murderer—a wretch, who had brought disgrace and dishonour on the name of Levison, and who had completed the foul catalogue of her crimes, by inhumanly assisting to murder the generous man who had raised her from poverty and obscurity to rank and affluence.

He had trembled at the time, at the energy with which the old woman had denounced vengeance against the unhappy object of her reprobation; but what were his feelings now, when he recognised in this proscribed, detested woman, the mother whom he had so often delighted to image to himself, as all that was tender and amiable—the loss of whose maternal cares he had so often mourned, and of whom he had so often sighed to possess some, even the most trifling memorial!——A long pause prevailed whilst these reflections passed across his mind; and at length Elinor resumed—

"And is it possible that, even now, you are so imperfectly acquainted with the circumstances of your birth, as not to know that your mother was the wretched wife of Augustus Levison, the elder brother of him to whom you are indebted, not only for all the advantages you now enjoy, but even for existence; for your mother left you

to perish! Yes, my son, I acknowledge—revolting as it appears—I deserted my children—left them to the mercy of that world, which has had no compassion on me! But think not I fled because I was conscious of the horrible crime that was laid to my charge! It was true I could have cleared myself, by declaring the truth; but, in so doing, I must have condemned my father—I could not do this, and I fled!"

"Then he was the murderer?" exclaimed Denzil, "that man, at whose very voice my heart seemed to revolt, he——"

"Yes," she replied, in a low and hurried tone, "to you I dare acknowledge the truth—acknowledge what tortures would not wring from me, were I not certain that the horrible secret will not be used to his disadvantage. My son, I dare trust you," and she looked wildly in his face.

"You may," returned Denzil, with emphasis, "but I would first ask you—since you have led me to conclude that I have no claims on Mr. Levison, but those his benevolence have created,—to whom do I owe my birth?"

She hid her face with her hands for some moments, while sighs of the bitterest agony seemed to suffocate the words she would have uttered.

"To answer your question," she at length articulated, "it will be necessary that I retrace scenes and events, which years of misery, of shame, and of suffering, have not erased from my memory. Erased! Alas, the remembrance of them is as vivid as though they had happened but yesterday; but I will not protract that painful feeling of suspense and expectation which is painted in your countenance.

"At an early age I lost my only friend—my mother. She was the gentlest, the meekest being that ever breathed, and though my spirit sometimes, even when a child, revolted against the tyranny of my father, and the blind implicit submission to his will which he exacted from her, yet I unconsciously imbibed the same terror of his frown—the same habit of implicit dependance upon and obedience to his dictates, even though my feelings and understanding would have led me to judge and to act differently. Yet it was not by violence alone that he established his empire (for so I may truly call it) over me. With my mother, indeed, the bare indication of his will was a law—but with me he would condescend to employ argument and persuasion; and few, I believe, ever possessed such powers of making 'the worse appear the better cause,' as he did. My mother's death left me still more dependant on him—still more exposed to the influence of his vile sophistry, yet it did not corrupt my heart, although it influenced my conduct.

"I was not sixteen when I accompanied my father, who went to join the regiment to which he had been appointed in his medical capacity. It is now no vanity in me to say, that at that period I possessed more than an ordinary share of personal beauty. There are few females, I believe, who are unconscious of their superiority in this respect; but, had I been naturally free from the common foible of my sex, my father would not have suffered me to remain in ignorance of the advantages I possessed. In fact it was evident, even to me, that I owed all his kindness, all the value I seemed to have in his eyes, to this circumstance. 'A girl of sense and understanding, with beauty,' he used to observe, 'has her

fortune in her own hands; and it is entirely her own fault, if she does not make a proper use of what Nature has so liberally endowed her with.' But, though I was thus taught that it was my duty to lay out my charms to the best advantage, and, above all, to consider wealth as the first and most important consideration in my admirers, my heart and feelings had formed a very different system, and I secretly determined that, to secure my acceptance, something more than that which my father required, would be necessary.

"My father's free and convivial manners, and the fame of his beautiful daughter, soon made our apartments the rendezvous of all the gay and unthinking among the officers who were his associates, and of these he secretly pointed out to me more than one, as worth taking pains to secure.

"My heart, however, soon made its own election, and fortunate did I then think it, that it was such a one as he, whom I considered the arbiter of my destinies, approved. I was then little more than sixteen—your father was twenty-six—and, even at that early age, had acquired the highest reputation for gallantry and skill in his profession. He was of a noble family, too—the heir of a peerage, and in the expectancy of an ample fortune; and when I add to this, that his person was strikingly handsome, and his manners and accomplishments of the most superior order, it will not appear surprising that I should, from his first introduction, regard him with peculiar favour.

"Our first meeting was, indeed, decisive of my fate. I had often heard of him—had heard traits of his generosity and feeling, and anecdotes of his bravery, in abun-

dance, recited in the after-dinner conversations between my father and his guests; but I had heard, too, that he was proud, or rather reserved in his communication with his brother officers; and that, though half the ladies, in the place where we were quartered, were said to be dying in love for him, and though he seemed to consider women as entitled to the highest deference and attention, yet his heart appeared insensible to the charms of beauty; and if he ever shewed any particular devotion to one more than the other, it was always to some female whose age or other circumstances placed love totally out of the question.

"He had never been of our parties, and it so happened that, for nearly three months, I had never had any nearer view of him than when on horseback, surrounded with those who were all proud of his friendship, and contending for his notice. I saw that his person fully——but I need not attempt to describe him, for in you I see him again before me. Oh, yes, I knew I could not be mistaken when I first beheld you, walking down St. James's Street, though I knew not then that you were in London. You passed without noticing me—your eyes, your thoughts were all absorbed by the beautiful girl who hung on your arm—I did not then dream that she, too, was mine—I thought that she was the honoured, happy object of your young affection——"

"Pray——for mercy's sake, forbear!" uttered Denzil, in broken accents.

"Well, then, my dear boy, I will proceed with my sad story," she replied.

"My curiosity was raised, and, I confess, my pride in some degree piqued by the cool indifference with which

his eyes passed over me, when, in consequence of something that was said to him by one of his companions, he once looked up to the window at which I was standing.

"It was the first time that I had ever met the look of any man, whom I thought worth looking at, without reading in his countenance admiration. I thought of that cold, that almost contemptuous glance, for many hours afterwards, and I turned, with disgust and aversion, from the adulation of those from whom whom I was accustomed to hear nothing else; and like a child, who despises every toy presented to it, and persists in crying for the moon, I could think of nothing but him, who was to all appearances completely above my powers.

"Some weeks passed away before I again saw him. —A man belonging to the regiment had been killed by a lamentable accident, and his wife, a young interesting woman, with three infants, was in a state of the most frantic grief and despair.

"I had frequently noticed the children, and had made them some trifling presents, and on hearing of the accident, I flew without delay to offer my assistance to the poor creature, whom I found in a state of the deepest despondency.

"She had not shed a tear, but was sitting on the ground, by the side of the low bed on which the poor fellow was laid, with her eyes fixed on her children; one of which she held in her arms, while the other two were playing around her, and trying in vain to arouse her attention to them.

"I took the baby, which one of the women present whispered me she had before refused to part with, having grasped it with such violence that they were afraid of

injuring it, if they persevered in their endeavours to remove it. She looked at me, at first, as if she would have resisted my taking it, but the next moment voluntarily yielded it. The other two, in the expectation of receiving my usual donation of cakes or fruit, had crowded to me, at the moment I entered. I was unable to controul my feelings at the look of woe which the bereaved mother turned upon me, and I sat down and wept over the poor orphans, without being able to utter a word of consolation, though I had come purposely to console.

"I was still weeping, and inattentive to all that passed around me, when I was suddenly aroused by the sound of a sweet melodious voice, addressing the poor widow —I raised my eyes, and beheld the very person who had so long, so often, occupied my thoughts. I felt confused, but his eyes no longer expressed *coldness*—he glanced towards me, but it was only a momentary glance—I should do him injustice to say that I believe he thought of me for more than a moment—his thoughts and feelings were all absorbed by the scene of woe before him.

"He raised the poor woman from the ground, and that which persuasion and force had vainly tried to effect, the sound of his voice, or rather the habitual submission to her husband's commanding officer, effected in a minute.

"She suffered him to lead her from the corpse, and seat her in an outer room. I heard him gently employ every argument that feeling or Christian charity could suggest to induce her, for the sake of her children and herself, to remember the promise which had been given in that Word which never fails: 'I will be a husband to the widow, and a father to those who are fatherless.'

"The poor woman burst into a flood of tears—they were the first she had shed, and they were salutary. I had not then known what anguish it is to be unable to shed a tear, when the brain is burning——but, to proceed: ——I heard him promise her, if she would try and compose himself, and bear with fortitude the calamity she had met with, he would be a friend to her, and a protector of her children; and he concluded by giving her, I could hear, a substantial proof of the sincerity of his intentions. The poor creature wept and promised, and thanked him—and I, oh how I idolised him at that moment! I could have fallen at his feet, and worshipped him—so superior did he seem, in my eyes, to the thoughtless, unfeeling beings with whom I had been accustomed to associate.

"I did not move, yet I trembled lest he should go away without again entering the room in which I sat. He said a few words to the women, who were officiously displaying their zeal in the service of the distressed widow, and I fancied that I heard him reward their charity with more than words, before he entered the chamber of death.

"He made a respectful bow to me as he entered, and then advancing to the bed, drew aside the sheet which covered the face of the corpse, the manly features of which had undergone no change from the violent end he had met with.

"'Poor fellow,' he sighed, 'thy fate was sudden!' He turned away, and I saw the tear which he vainly struggled to repress, fall on the cheek of him whose untimely fate he lamented. After standing a few minutes at the window, evidently to regain his tranquillity, he turned to me with a melancholy smile——

"'This is a melancholy sight, madam,' he observed, 'even to me, accustomed to scenes of death, in much more awful forms; but to one so young, so gay as you, it must be particularly awful.'

"I tried to reply—I thought there was something in the word *gay*, which implied reproach, and I would fain have replied—would fain have told him that, young and gay as I was, my heart was never insensible to the claims of humanity; but my tears spoke more forcibly than my words would have done, could I have found utterance for them.——Why should I dwell upon this scene? Alas, I have no longer a heart to feel—it has become seared, callous! What were the sorrows I have described, to those which I have endured—endured, not for weeks or months only, but for years—long, long years—and none have pitied, none have compassionated me. Even he—he who came thus beneficently to comfort the widow and her orphans—he who never relaxed his benevolent exertions, until he saw her comfortably and permanently provided for—he left *me* to despair and misery, and——but I will not do him injustice. He did not leave me to suffer the bitter horrors of destitution, poverty, and starvation, which I have known. No, for that I have to thank him whose vices deprived his wretched daughter even of that poor compensation for shame and disgrace, which the liberality of her destroyer, if not his love, induced him to bestow upon her.

"Again I am wandering from my story. Frederic, for so I soon learned to call him, by gentle violence forced me from the cottage. The children were loud in their lamentations at my leaving them.

"'She will soon come again, my fine fellow,' he

observed, patting the curly head of the oldest. 'She will come again to see you, and so will I—we will both come.'

"Oh, how proud I felt at being associated with him, and by himself, too, at this moment.

"We walked down the street together—I was trembling and agitated, and with the most respectful tenderness he entreated me to accept the support of his arm. It was the first time that I had ever felt bashful or confused at such an offer—but I felt that I trembled still more as I accepted it.

"'You will allow me to see you to your home, madam?' he observed, in a soft tone. 'We are, it is true, strangers to each other; but, in such a case as the present, you will, I hope, dispense with ceremony, and consider me as a friend.

"I bowed in silence. Can it be possible (I thought,) that he does not know me? The idea was not very flattering to my vanity, but I was soon destined to prove its truth.

"He was too full of the scene we had quitted, to enter into conversation on indifferent subjects—but he talked to me of the poor soldier, who had fought by his side in more than one engagement, and whose bravery, as well as his general conduct, he said, rendered him worthy of all the regret which his untimely death had occasioned.

"'Yes,' he observed, in an animated tone, 'he was worthy even of the tears which you, madam, have shed for him!'

"It was the first time he had uttered any thing like a compliment to me, and I was still fluttering with the feeling it created, so unlike the vain exultation with

which I had often heard the adulation of my admirers, when my father and a young officer came suddenly out of a house, as we were passing.

"My father started—but pleasure was evidently mingled with the surprise with which he beheld me thus accompanied.

"'Elinor, my dear child,' he exclaimed, in that tone of kindness he so well could assume, 'where have you been? But I need not ask the question—for I am well aware, from your countenance, that you have been, as usual, employed in the task of aiding the afflicted, and that you have there met one——' bowing to the Colonel, my companion——

"'I have taken the liberty of escorting Miss Tyrrell, sir, though I knew not, until this moment, who the lady was, whose kind and benevolent sympathy with the distressed is so much to her honour,' he replied, interrupting my father in the compliment he was about to utter, 'and I will now resign her to your care.'

"I was hurt, mortified, and I believe he saw it—for, instead of leaving us, as his words indicated, he still lingered by my side, though he had resigned my arm, addressed some common-place observations to my father, and had reached the threshold of our residence, before they were concluded.

"My father asked him to enter our house—he was upon the point, I saw, of refusing; but he looked at me, hesitated, and finally accepted the invitation.

"I have been thus particular in describing the commencement of our acquaintance, because I would wish to convince you that it was no frivolous or disgraceful feeling that first prompted my attachment to your father.

"From this period he was a constant visitor—I might say, he lived with us—for, except when obliged to be absent on business, he was never an hour from my side.

"I felt my heart and understanding improved by his society—my father was kind, his mode of life more regular; we were free from those pecuniary embarrassments which had frequently been a source of bitter mortification to me, and I was, for the first time in my life, perfectly happy. Alas, how short was that dream of felicity!

"Frederic had never in words told me that he loved me, but every look and action declared it; and the world, (my world, at least,) congratulated me upon having secured so splendid and desirable a settlement.

"But the veil was speedily withdrawn—Frederic absented himself the whole of one day—I was wretched, and my father uneasy. He called at his lodgings, and was told that he had received letters from England, and was then busily engaged in writing, but that he would be with us at breakfast next morning. He came, but looking dreadfully ill and unhappy, which he accounted for by saying he had received unpleasant intelligence from home, and had been up all night. I saw plainly that his manners were changed—he was to me as gentle and as tender as usual, but he avoided speaking or looking at me, more than he could help; while to my father he was strikingly cool and constrained; and once I caught his eye fixed on him, (my father,) when the latter was speaking, with an expression of bitter contempt.

"He sat for some time silent, after the breakfast-table

had been removed, as if debating something in his mind; but at length he started up——

"'Mr. Tyrrell,' he exclaimed, 'I must speak with you—I can bear this suspense no longer!'

"He was following my father into the next room, without looking at me—but at the door he turned round, and read the alarm and surprise forcibly painted in my countenance.

"He flew to me, and, seizing my hand, pressed it passionately to his lips.

"'Elinor,' he observed, 'either I return to claim you as mine, or you see me no more!'

"I could not utter a word, and he left the room.

"More than two hours elapsed, in suspense. At first I could hear their voices alternately raised, as if in altercation; but at length they subsided into low murmuring accents, and occasionally I almost doubted whether they had not left the room, from the dead silence that seemed to prevail.

At last, they came—*both* came. Oh, how tumultuously my heart throbbed, as Frederic entered the room.

"'Forgive me, Elinor,' he observed, 'I have needlessly agitated and alarmed you—but all is explained, and henceforth there will be no misunderstanding between your father and me.'

"I thought there was something of bitterness in the tone in which he pronounced this last sentence—but the impression was speedily effaced. Frederic became not only animated, but extravagantly gay—I had never seen him so before, and it appeared unnatural.

"It was unnatural—it was a violent effort to drown the stings of conscience. For the first time, Frederic had engaged in a transaction which his heart revolted from, and which he dared not reflect upon.

"He said nothing in a direct manner respecting that union which he had before so strongly alluded to—yet he talked of several things, which indicated that he considered our fates as henceforth united; and, among the rest, of a tour which he and I were shortly to take, and which he reckoned would occupy us for six or seven weeks.

"I could not comprehend all this, but I was satisfied—He was to be my husband, and I had no thought or wish beyond it.

"It was nearly morning, when he left us—He apologised for having kept me up so late.

"'But,' he added, 'the time will, I trust, soon arrive, when I shall have no more need of such apologies. You will use your influence, Mr. Tyrrell, I trust, to induce Elinor not to protract that period.'

"'If Elinor will listen to my wishes——'

"Frederic darted out of the room before my father could finish the sentence, and I was left wondering, and divided between terror at his manner, and joy at the prospect which seemed to present itself to me.

"'You are surprised, Elinor,' said my father, as soon as we were alone; 'but I will now explain all that appears mysterious to you—Frederic has received letters from his relations in England, of which you are the subject. Some of my good-natured friends,' he continued, with a bitter smile, 'have taken pains to represent me and you in the blackest colours, and have required of him an

explanation of his intentions towards you. His father, who is a man of sense, and knows the world, writes—'If the girl is your mistress, only say so at once, and I will satisfy your mother and your uncle that there is nothing to fear; for of course I do not want to interfere in your *petits amours*—but, if you really are fool enough to entertain the project of making her your wife, rely upon it that my resentment will not be less durable or effective than theirs, and you must consider yourself an alien to your family—for never will I or they forgive you—this I solemnly swear—and you know I will not break my word. You may inherit the empty title, which I cannot deprive you of—but not a farthing of the property that should support it; and your uncle is equally resolute on this point. So, take your choice between beggary and seven thousand a-year, which is the least you will lose.'

"I listened to this, (which he pretended to read from a letter) with mingled agony and indignation.

"'And does he think, then, that I would consent?' I exclaimed——

"'Stop—let us have no heroics, if you please,' observed my father, with that tone of voice and look which was ever sufficient to awe me into silence and submission. 'Hear what we propose—and recollect, I will have no false delicacy opposed to my wishes. It will be sufficient for you to know that you are his wife, without assuming the title, and exposing him to the resentment of his friends. In a few days I shall accompany you to—— The priest there, for a handsome compensation, will perform the marriage ceremony, which he will also keep secret; and then let the world think what it will, until

the time comes when he shall be able openly to avow his alliance with you.'

"I heard this proposition with bitter feelings of shame and indignation. Shame for the father who could propose that his daughter should, even for an hour, much less for years, perhaps for her life—consent to appear as the degraded mistress of him she dare not claim as a husband; but I felt still greater shame for Frederic, whose proud spirit I could scarcely believe would ever stoop to such baseness. But, as might be expected, my father's arguments and authority, and my love for Frederic, prevailed over my scruples—the scheme was carried into effect, and I was united to the man whom I adored."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Denzil, with a rapture he could not suppress, "then I am not, after all, the child of shame, nor need I blush for my mother!"

She shook her head mournfully, and proceeded—

"I was so complete a novice as not to be aware that a marriage ceremony, performed in private by a catholic priest, was in fact no marriage; and, satisfied that I was really his wife, I became by degrees perfectly reconciled to the deprivation of the title.

"Before we returned, my father had taken a handsome house, for the expenses of which Frederic was responsible—and thither he removed. I now fancied myself happy, beyond the reach of fate—but I soon saw that Frederic was not. His love for me seemed to suffer no diminution—on the contrary, his tenderness appeared to increase; yet he was restless, uneasy, and at times gloomy, to a degree that excited a thousand vague fears and terrors in my mind.

"Frequently I caught his eyes fixed upon me, with an expression of melancholy and regret that I in vain attempted to assign a motive for; and once I recollect being awakened from a peaceful sleep, by his warm tears dropping on my face, as he watched over me. But too soon was this explained—I was distracted at learning that he had been appointed to the command of a regiment destined for a distant service, and that it was absolutely impossible for me to accompany him. At first, my father appeared grieved and vexed, but he soon became reconciled to the arrangement; and I was obliged to be satisfied with the promise that I should join Frederic, as soon as it were practicable.

"I parted from him with tolerable fortitude, but I saw, though he strove to appear calm and composed, that he was in reality greatly agitated. Alas, little did I think that he was then quitting me for ever!—and that what I considered the effects of his tenderness and love for me, were the pangs of remorse and shame at having deceived me!

"With him fled every vestige of happiness, or even comfort. My father, who appeared by his presence only to have been restrained in his former evil courses, returned at once to his riotous and intemperate habits. I had no female associates, for my apparent situation shut me out from all, and our house was perfectly filled with the most dissolute and profligate of the other sex. At length I ventured to remonstrate—but my father treated my observations with contempt, and sneered at my prudish affectation—I hinted that *my husband* would not be pleased, were he to know that I was thus exposed to insults.——Never shall I forget the sarcastic

sneer with which my father repeated the word '*husband!*'

"'It is quite time to dismiss all that nonsense from your mind, Elinor,' he added; 'you surely cannot have been so foolish as to believe that you had any real claim to the title of a wife—I mean, *legal* claim?'

"I cannot tell you what followed—I cannot pretend to recollect or to describe the rage, the agony——oh, no, words cannot paint what I felt during the explanation that followed—Yet it was not so much for my own degradation and utter ruin I mourned, as for him who had thus disgraced himself by stooping to such base arts to lure me to destruction. It appeared from my father's confession that he had suggested the plan of the pretended marriage, merely to save my scruples. He had no alternative, he said, between this and utter ruin—for he had contracted obligations which he could not discharge, and Frederic would have withdrawn his assistance, if he had opposed the gratification of his love. This was false—I know it was false—and I know, too, that Frederic recoiled at first with terror from the base proposals of my unnatural parent, who literally sold his child's honour for a sum which he dissipated at the gaming-table in a few hours afterwards. I am well assured of this, for my wretched father has since, in a moment of temporary remorse, unfolded the whole of the black, the revolting secret."

A long pause ensued, during which the unfortunate Elinor remained lost in gloomy meditation, apparently recalling to her memory the feelings which, at the period she alluded to, had agonised her—but she was awakened to recollection of the present by the voice of Denzil, who

in the tenderest accents endeavoured to soothe and console her, and she proceeded.

"A few weeks only had elapsed from the period which consigned me to inevitable shame and misery, before my father was, in consequence of a transaction which it will be useless to detail, dismissed from the situation he held, with ignominy and disgrace. A small sum only remained out of all that the liberality of your father had appropriated for me, but which, with inexcusable thoughtlessness, he had left completely in my father's power, and with this we retreated to England, where only we could hope to remain unknown.

"I knew not (for he seldom communicated any of his plans to me) what were his real intentions, at the time that accident threw us in the way of Mr. Levison, the brother of your benefactor. The result of that occurrence you know—I became his wife—but you can never know the wretchedness, the heart-rending pangs with which I consented to this step. My feelings towards Mr. Levison were at first only those of dislike and aversion; but his excessive generosity and indulgence, and the openness and integrity of his character, contrasted with my father's tyranny and total want of principle, enforced my respect. I tried to shut my eyes to the past, and to look forward to the future, as offering the prospect of a life of comfort and respectability. I determined to devote my whole cares to make the life of my husband and those dependant on him, happy—but from this dream I was fearfully awakened by discovering that I was in a situation which would inevitably betray my previous dishonour. Had I consulted the dictates of my own heart, I should have fled for ever from his presence, and have

avoided, at least, hearing his reproaches; but my fatal habit of dependance on and subjection to my father's councils kept me wavering, until it was too late. My husband's suspicions were awakened—he became gloomy and estranged from me, though apparently unable or unwilling to believe the full extent of his misfortune. At last the storm burst, with all the vehemence and rage that might have been expected, from one who thus suddenly found himself betrayed, where he had fixed his fondest hopes. He accused my father and me of the deception we had practised—my father would have attempted to soothe him—to have persuaded him of his own innocence of having wilfully betrayed him into a dishonourable alliance—he tried, too, to plead for me—to represent me as the victim of an unprincipled man, who had taken advantage of my youth and inexperience to betray me—but Mr. Levison's violence, at finding that that which he had still "hoped against hope," was confirmed beyond a doubt, transported him beyond the bounds of reason.

"At the commencement of the conversation which led to this disclosure, I fainted away—and I know not how long I remained in this state of insensibility; but when I recovered, I was in my own room, and alone. I recalled to my recollection with terror the scene I had quitted—the rage of Mr. Levison, and the deep dark look which had dwelt on my father's brow, were still present to my imagination—I trembled with agony, as I arose to listen whether I could still hear the voice of the latter—but all was silent, and I dreaded the shame of meeting the eyes of any of the servants—all of whom, I conceived, were by this time in possession of my secret.

"Under this impression, I stole down the stairs, to the door of the room in which my father and Mr. Levison were. All was silent—I tried to enter, but it was locked. A vague and dreadful fear took possession of my mind—I was about to scream for help, when a thought suddenly darted into my mind that I could enter from the terrace, through the windows which opened on to it. Thither I flew, rather than ran, and entered to behold Mr. Levison stretched on the ground, in the agonies of death. Seated on a chair opposite, apparently stupefied, and irresolute how to act, was my father.

"The sight of me, and my breathless terror, seemed to recal his senses.

"'Fool!' he exclaimed, in a low agitated tone, 'what are you come here for? He is dying in a fit—but if you are here, we shall both be ruined—destroyed! Has any one seen you?'

"I shook my head wildly, for I could not utter a word.

"'Go back, then, quickly! for your life, go back! and do not stir till I come to you! Hasten, if you do not wish to destroy yourself and me!'

"I obeyed him—I know not why I obeyed him, or how my trembling limbs supported me to my own chamber; but, when I reached it, I again for a time found respite from misery in insensibility.

"I did not, however, it appeared, escape wholly unseen. My own maid—a good, kind-hearted girl—had seen me retreat from the room; and that circumstance gave colour to the suspicion which was soon raised, that I had been an accessary to, or a passive witness of the dreadful deed that had been perpetrated.

"I will not dwell on the horrible scenes that followed. Within a few hours of Mr. Levison's death, you and your sister first saw the light. Until the moment I beheld you, I had prayed incessantly to die—but now, oh, how changed were my feelings! I felt that I could have begged my bread with you—could have worked with pleasure and delight to support you! I had a considerable sum, the gift of Mr. Levison, in my possession, and I formed a thousand different schemes for my future life, determining, as soon as ever I should be sufficiently recovered, to leave the house and place I was in, and seek some spot where my unhappy story could never be known; and where, in the love and respect of my children, I should find a compensation for all the misery I had suffered. But these visions were too soon banished by the certainty of the dreadful fate that awaited me, and which the pity and affection of the kind-hearted girl, who had attended me with unexampled tenderness since my confinement, had hitherto concealed from me.

"The manner of Mr. Levison's death had excited suspicions in the minds of his domestics, that he had been unfairly dealt with—my father saw the dangerous precipice on which he stood, and fled, having first secured every valuable that he could appropriate to himself. From Ann, my attendant, I first learned that he was now proscribed as a felon and a murderer; and from her, too, I learned the fatal truth, that I was included in the horrible crimes that were laid to his charge, and that my recovery was waited for with impatience, to consign me to a prison. Oh, with what anguish did I discover that even this good girl, sincerely attached as she was to me, believed me guilty! Yes, she who knew me best—who

knew that I could not harm the worm that crawled across my path—she believed that I had assisted at the murder of one to whom I was bound by every tie of esteem and gratitude! What, then, could I hope from strangers!

"I heard that the brother of Mr. Levison had arrived at the Hall; and that his sorrow for his brother's untimely fate was only appeased by the hope of bringing his murderers to justice. My father's flight was an undeniable proof of his guilt—but Ann hinted to me that I might save myself, by freely confessing all that I knew.

"Can you doubt that this thought was even more horrible than that of being myself condemned, for a crime of which I knew myself innocent? It was in vain that Ann insisted that it would not be me who would condemn him, even if he were taken, as there was quite sufficient evidence without mine; and that it was only to clear myself she wished me to acknowledge all I had seen or known of that horrible transaction. In vain she assured me that it was, she was convinced, the only way to make Mr. Charles Levison my friend. I was resolute not to breathe one word that could injure my father, and Ann was in despair. At length she ventured to suggest the thought of escape! My father still eluded all the search that was made for him, and it was concluded he had succeeded in getting off to a foreign country—and why could I not hope to do so too? Can you wonder that, with such a prospect before me, I caught eagerly at the idea of getting away from those who would have consigned me to shame and death? I did escape, thanks to my guardian friend, the kind-hearted creature, whom I believed, too, when she asserted, that, in leaving my children to her

care, I ran no risk of their being deserted; for, if none else would provide for them, she would—and her marriage, which was on the point of taking place, would enable her so to do. It was not possible for me to take the children with me; for, independently of my being incapable, from weakness, of bearing the fatigue of two infants, Ann very properly suggested that I should be immediately traced, by the singular circumstance of travelling with two babes, only a few weeks old.

"For the present, therefore, I was obliged to relinquish you—but it was only for the present, as I believed; for Ann engaged that the children should be conveyed to me, whenever I was in a situation to receive them. It will be too tedious to recount the particulars of my escape—suffice it to say, that, at the expiration of three days, I found myself in London; a place, to which I was a total stranger, without a friend to advise or to direct me!"

Overcome by the recollection of the desolate and destitute condition in which she had been placed, at this period of her history, the unfortunate Elinor paused for a few moments, in intense agony, which was at length relieved by a flood of tears, while Denzil, oppressed by her many sorrows, became completely unmanned, and wept and sobbed aloud.

"It was now the depth of winter, and in the dark evenings I walked with confidence along the streets, wrapped in a large cloak, and my face nearly covered by my bonnet and large veil—but it was decreed that I should be discovered! My father's eye had, it seems, been caught by a pair of fire-screens of my painting, which were exhibited in a shop-window in a fashionable street. They were the counterparts of a pair which I had executed to please Frederic, during the days of my happiness, and were in a new and peculiar style. The more he looked at them, the more he was convinced that no one but myself had been the artist He entered the shop to inquire, and the description which the young woman behind the counter gave of my person, confirmed his belief that he had discovered me. He learned from her that she did not know my residence, but that I should probably be there that evening, and he accordingly took his station opposite the house, at the hour I was expected.

"Never shall I forget the horror that overcame me, as he laid his hand upon my shoulder, and I heard his well-known voice sound in my ear! It seemed as if the earth was opening to swallow me!

"He pretended to attribute my emotion to pleasure at seeing him, and inquired into the particulars of my departure from Cumberland, and what had occurred there after he left——but why should I be particular in repeating what transpired, or the manner in which he contrived again to unite my destiny with his. By degrees, he resumed all his usual power and influence over me—but my spirits sank—I no longer dared indulge in the visions which had cheered my exertions. He scoffed at my pinings after my children, and treated my

designs of reclaiming them from Ann as visionary and chimerical; and I soon felt, too forcibly, that they were likely to prove so—for his resources were nearly exhausted before he met me, and I was now obliged to supply his wants, as well as my own. The consequence of constant and intense application, and entire confinement from fresh air, or relaxation of any kind, together with anxiety and distress of mind, at length produced a nervous disorder, which totally incapacitated me from holding the pencil, or, indeed, doing any thing that required nicety of execution.

"One by one, every article which would procure a temporary supply, disappeared; and at length we were reduced to such extremity, that starvation actually stared us in the face. My father's temper was not improved by our circumstances—but I soon began to have more serious disquietude on his account, than that which arose from his imperiousness and his repinings. He returned home one evening, after having been absent all day, in a state of intoxication, but, contrary to his custom, very good-humoured.

"I had eaten nothing all day, for I was as yet unacquainted with the mode by which he transformed all our moveables, clothes, &c. into money. To my surprise, however, he produced plenty of money, though he had gone out penniless; and, after desiring me to get something good for supper, he added,

"'You must get up pretty early to-morrow, my girl, and have breakfast ready by eight o'clock, for two or three friends of mine!'

"I was astonished—but I dared not hazard the loss of his good humour by asking questions, and I did as he had directed me.

"The *friends* came—they were three men of a certain sort of appearance, usually styled shabby genteel—one of them was a fine-looking young man, but with a peculiarly unpleasant expression of countenance; and, accustomed as I had been to the unqualified gaze of admiration from the male sex, my eyes involuntarily sank, and my cheeks crimsoned, at the boldness and licentiousness of his pertinacious stare.

"My father gave him a hint that I had lately been much secluded from company, and was bashful and timid, to which he replied by asserting, with an oath, that it was a shame such a fine girl should be kept shut up by herself, adding, with a slap on the shoulder, which made my father start, 'But we will bring her out, and show her a bit o' life, old boy—and, by way of beginning, I move that we all go to the play to-night! I've got a box order for two, and she and I can go with it, while you three may go into the gallery, if you don't like to pay six shillings a-piece to go with us; or you can stay at home and enjoy yourselves, if you like it better, and come to us at half-price; or you may wait till we come back, whichever you like best.'

"I was going to put a decided negative on this proposal—but my father's looks restrained me; and I only uttered a faint assurance that I had no wish to go to any place of public entertainment, nor any spirits to enjoy amusement.

"'Oh, we'll soon give you spirits, my little angel,' he replied, with disgusting familiarity. 'I'll be bound to say, before you and I have been many weeks acquainted, you'll be quite a different thing to what you now are.'

"But I will spare you and myself the repetition of

the scenes to which I was now introduced. From this period, my father and these men became inseparable. One of them, I found, he had known for some years; but the others were strangers. Alas, the purest morals and manners must insensibly yield to the contagion engendered by constant association with those of opposite principles and conduct; but my naturally good feelings had never been cultivated or encouraged; on the contrary, every thing had combined to render me accessible to the assaults which were now made upon those right principles and feelings which still, at times, exerted their sway over my mind. In short, I fell lower than I had ever before fallen—and, in spite of the disgust I often felt at his manners—in spite of my suspicions, nay, my certainty, that his pursuits were of the most disgraceful nature, and that I was only plunging myself still deeper into difficulty and distress, by such an alliance—I became the wife of Edwards, the young man I have spoken of. But I married him under no deceptive ideas—he knew my whole history—too well he knew it!

"I will briefly pass over the first two years of our marriage—it was, as might be expected, a scene of alternate misery and dissipation; and when the first impulse of passion, which had prompted him to marry me, had subsided, the conduct of Edwards was such as was little likely to secure either my respect or esteem. If he had money, he was good-humoured and fond; but when, as was often the case, his resources were exhausted, I was doomed to bear all his spleen and bad temper. But this was not the worst—he became as violently attached to another female, as he had (before our marriage) been to me; and I could plainly see that, from this period, though

I had now two children by him, his whole thoughts were bent on getting rid of me. My life was now dreadful—every brutality that a disposition naturally ferocious could practise, was exercised towards me. Even my children seemed to be regarded by this savage with aversion—but, happily, (I now say, happily) that cause of discontent was soon removed; for, within a week, I followed them both to the grave.

"I will not pretend that I did not lament them; on the contrary, my grief was, for a time, too violent to admit of consolation. This increased my husband's distaste towards me; and I was completely weary of my life, when an incident occurred which parted us for ever.

"I was closing the shutters of our small dwelling, when a man, who had stood for some moments watching me, approached, and in a low voice, accosted me as 'Mrs. Levison.' I started in terror—but replied, that that was not my name.

"'It was the name you bore, when I knew you in Cumberland,' he replied.

"I again, but in a faltering voice, replied, that he was mistaken—I did not know the name.

"'And will you tell me, too, that I am mistaken in saying that I saw your father, Mr. Tyrrell, no longer ago than yesterday, enter this house?' he observed. 'Well, well, it's no matter!'—and he walked away, without waiting for my answer.

"In a few minutes afterwards, my father entered—I told him what had occurred, and he sat for some minutes apparently lost in apprehension and alarm.

"'We must get away from here, directly, Elinor,'

he at length observed; 'the blood-hounds have traced us, and, if we linger, we are both lost.'

"I was ready to fly to the extreme ends of the earth, under the impressions of terror I then suffered—but I recollected my husband.

"'Edwards will be here directly,' I observed.

"'We must not trust him,' he replied; 'I have reason to think it is he who has betrayed us—I know that he would sell his soul to the devil, to accomplish his purpose.'

"I was horror-struck at the idea—but I hastened, according to my father's directions, to pack up every thing I possessed that was of any value; and once more I placed myself at my father's disposal.

"He conducted me to a remote quarter of the town—to a house which, he said, was kept by a man whom he could trust; but I shrank with horror, (accustomed, as I had lately been, to low and disgraceful society,) from the wretches with whom I was now associated.

"Five weeks did I pass in this den of infamy and crime—and then was driven from it, because our means were exhausted; for my father had lived away—drowning his fears, as he said, in riot and intemperance, until all that I had brought with me was gone.

"We were now literally without home or refuge. I dared not go back to my husband, lest he should betray me to the hands of justice; and, at length, driven from one expedient to another to support nature, I yielded to my father's proposal to join with some of the wretches with whom we had been living in Whitechapel, and accompany them in their intended expedition through different parts of England, under the assumed denomi-

nation of gipsies, though the greater part of them had no other title to this name than that which they derived from adopting the same lawless habits and roving sort of life.

"I had now dismissed all lingering remains of pride, and stifled every other feeling but a desire to enjoy life on as easy terms as I could; and, except the strong natural affection which I still retained towards my children, I possessed no vestiges of what I had once been. My parental feelings, however, still survived, and when, in the course of their wanderings, the tribe, with which I was now completely identified, entered Cumberland, I resolved, at all risks, to make an attempt to see them.

"The disguise, which I had learned from my associates to assume, prevented my having any fear of being known; but, indeed, even without disguising myself, I was so altered by sorrow, care, and the irregularity of my life, that I felt there was little probability of any person's recognising, in the miserable gipsy mendicant, the once envied and admired mistress of Levison Hall.

"Oh, with what feelings of agony and remorse did I enter upon that well-known domain. The character I had assumed, gave me easy access to some of the inferior servants, whom I astonished by my accurate knowledge of past events, and gratified with my predictions for the future; and, in return, easily drew from them all the information I wanted respecting my children.

"My dear son, you recollect, you must recollect, the unhappy being who terrified you by the extravagance of her fondness——"

"I do recollect it," said Denzil; "young as I was at the time, I can now remember the strong impression

Engraved by Lepage

THE GIPSY, ELINOR, & HER COMPANIONS.

"Cast my hand & you shall know"

"All the Gipsys Art can show"

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your tears and caresses made upon my mind, though, until the present moment, it had faded from my memory, or, at least, had left only that indistinct recollection that one sometimes feels on awaking from a confused dream."

"My second parting with you," she resumed, "was infinitely more painful and distressing than the first—for when I originally quitted Levison Hall, fears for myself, terror lest I should be discovered, and hope that, if I did escape the present danger, I might, at no very distant period, be enabled to reclaim you—divided my feelings; but now I looked upon you with the dreadful certainty that never should I dare to call myself your mother! I might, indeed, have taken you both with me—you were wholly in my power—and the wretches, with whom I was associated, would, I knew, have gladly received you—for children were no burthens to them; on the contrary, they were a source of considerable profit. But I could not be such a wretch, as to withdraw you from the benevolence of such a protector, to introduce you to a life of profligacy and shame; and I stifled the thought which suggested itself, as I held you both pressed to my bosom.

"I saw you safe again under the protection of your friend Ann. Oh, how I longed to thank her, to bless her, for having so truly performed her promises to me, of watching over your welfare; but I feared to trust her prudence, and I quitted the place, only rendered more wretched from this short indulgence of my natural feelings and affections—an indulgence which I could never again hope to enjoy.

"From this period I continued, for several years, to lead the same wandering, unsettled course of life—

suffering, at times, the utmost extremes of misery, and at others—but all was misery! Yes, even the mirth, the revelry of which I partook, was misery! I will not attempt to describe to you the scenes of which I have been a witness, or the crimes of which I have been an unwilling partaker! You start!—Yes, my child, it is too true—my youth, my still-remaining beauty, and the superiority of my manners, made me a treasure to the gang, and I could not free myself from them, without bringing destruction on my father—but I will proceed to the period when circumstances occurred which induced me to quit England—alas, only to encounter fresh miseries! and deprived, too, of my last hope and consolation—the hope of some day revisiting the spot which contained my children, the only tie that seemed to unite me to the world. The thought that I might be enabled to see you, if it were only at a distance—to hover around you, and behold you happy—happy, in ignorance of your mother's fate, was torn from me, when I landed on a foreign shore! How little did I then foresee—but I will not anticipate; I will proceed regularly—as regularly as my poor shattered brain will let me.

"We were at Worcester races—a place which was generally the source of considerable gains to us; but, this year, fate seemed against us. Not one of our party was even moderately successful; and, on the last evening, we were nearly all assembled at our rendezvous on the borders of the race-ground—the men swearing at their ill-luck—and the women relating to each other the various attempts in which they had been foiled by some unlucky incident, or intervention, when we were joined by one of the tribe, who had remained on the race-ground after the

rest. He came in haste to tell them that he had just seen the farmer, in whose barn we had slept the two or three preceding nights, receive a large sum of money, for a horse which he had ridden thither, and that he was now drinking in a booth on the ground.

"'And how does he propose going home?' was the hurried inquiry, from several of the men at once.

"'A coach passes the end of the lane that leads up to his house,' was the reply; 'he will go by that.'

"'Yes, but the lane is three quarters of a mile long —It is close and dark, too, and it would not be hard for some of us to reach it, before him—for the coach does not pass by until twelve o'clock at night.'

"I listened to this consultation with horror—the farmer's wife had, only a few days before, given me food and clothing—she had treated me with particular kindness, and I had nursed and caressed her smiling children, and wept over them, as I thought of my own; and could I, then, deliberately hear a plan discussed, which, if carried into effect, would rob those innocents of their support—would make that happy wife a wretched widow, and her children destitute orphans! Yes—you shudder —but it was nothing less than the murder of this man they contemplated! They were aware that he was a powerful, resolute man, and that he would not be likely to yield his money, without resistance; they were aware, too, that, if they stood to parley with him, the chances were greatly in favour of his recognising the men whom his charity had sheltered and assisted. Their own safety, therefore, required that his life should be sacrificed—and my blood chilled in my veins as I heard them systematically arranging the mode they should pursue.

"Accustomed, however, to every species of dissimulation, I counterfeited the most perfect indifference to all I heard. My father, who would probably, (from his well-tried recklessness and contempt of danger, when opposed to interest,) have been fixed upon as one of the party, was fortunately disabled by an accident, which had injured one of his arms—he was not even present when the plan was formed; but, as I understood, had been left as a spy upon the farmer in the drinking-booth.

"I saw the four men depart on their murderous errand—the rest of the gang separated on different projects, and I was left, half stupefied with horror and remorse. It was yet in my power to prevent this horrible crime—a few words from me might open the poor man's eyes to the fate that awaited him; but how to accomplish it, I knew not, without exposing myself to the resentment of the gang, and I knew that they never pardoned treachery!—I knew my life would, sooner or later, be forfeited to their revenge! Even could I escape from my immediate associates, such were their means of communication with the numerous hordes that are scattered over the country—such the ties that bind them to each other's interests—that I was fully aware that I could not escape their vengeance, should they discover that I had betrayed them.

"Irresolute and wretched, I wandered to the race-ground, and at length found out the booth in which my father and the farmer were seated together, at a table, and both rather intoxicated.

"'Here comes my little black-eyed Susan!' observed the farmer, in a jocular tone. 'Well, my girl, what success hast thou had? How many foolish girls hast sent

home to dream of coaches-and-six, and handsome husbands, and troops of little ones as handsome as themselves?—But why doesn't rather think of looking out for a husband thyself? Thour't a neat, tidy, smart wench, and deservest to be better off, than strolling about in this vagabond way. I think thee'dst make a good wife, and I wish I could help thee to a good husband. Nay, never look dull, wench! thee does'nt know what good may be in store for thee yet —for thee can'st not tell thine own fortune, though thou pretend'st to tell the fortunes of other people.'

"'I wish you would let me tell yours, sir,' I replied, taking the jug of beer that he offered, and without daring to look at my father, who sat at the opposite side of the table.

"The farmer laughed—'No, no, my girl,' he replied, 'that will never do—you can't catch old birds with chaff! I am rather past that—my fortune's hard work and little profit, I can tell thee that. But come, I tell thee what thee shalt do, instead—thou shalt sing me one of thy best songs, and we will have another jug of beer—there will be time enough for that, before I start.'

"I sat down, the beer passed quickly round, and the farmer seemed unwilling to move. I saw plainly that my father was not aware of the plan that had been agreed upon by his confederates; and, instead of urging the farmer to go, he considered he was acting for the best, in endeavouring to detain him.

"The thought struck me, that, if the latter could be induced to remain until the coach had started, he would, in all probability, continue in the town during the night, and thus the murderous scheme would be effectually disconcerted.

"I therefore readily adopted my father's hints, and sang song after song, while the booth became crowded with company, who rewarded my exertions with a shower of half-pence, from time to time; while my father, as soon as his connexion with me was known, was so plentifully supplied with ale, that at length the vigilant watch he had kept upon the farmer relaxed, and he fell fast asleep.

"I still, however, kept my eye upon the object of my anxiety, who had completely forgotten the necessity for his leaving—but at length he remembered himself, and, starting up, drew out his watch.

"'Wouns, I shall be too late for the coach!' he exclaimed. 'There, my girl, there's a shilling for thee—may it be lucky—for I think thou saidst thou hadn't seen the colour of silver to-day.'

"I forgot even to thank him, as I inquired how he would get home, if the coach were gone?

"'How!' he repeated, with a look of surprise. 'What dost want to know for? How should I, but by the help of Adam's carriage—a stout pair of legs?'

"'But it will be dangerous,' I observed, in a low tone. 'You have got money about you, and—and'——I faltered, afraid to finish the sentence, though I saw my father was still sleeping, and no one seemed attending to our conversation.

"'Dangerous!' he exclaimed. 'No, no—doant thee think I am easily frightened! With this good oaken stick, Jonathan Goodwin wouldn't fear the devil himself, if he stood in the way!'

"He turned out of the booth, after shaking me

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heartily by the hand, and bidding me be a good girl, and take care of myself.

"I cast a hasty glance around, to see whether I was observed—no one was looking at me, and I darted after him.

"He was walking with great strides, and with difficulty I overtook him, and laid my hand gently upon his arm.

"'You must not go to-night,' I uttered, in breathless accents.

"He shook me impatiently off—'Go, go along, girl!' he exclaimed; 'do not think to impose upon me, with your canting tricks—but that's the way of all your gang—they're never contented! give you an inch, and you'll take an ell. Come, here's another sixpence for you—now, go back, like a good girl.'

"'I am not imposing upon you, Mr. Goodwin!' I exclaimed, with earnestness—'I *do* know that there is danger awaiting you, if you persist in now going home. Pray, be persuaded—remain in town to-night—you can start at day-light, and then there will be no fear.'

"'And where should I sleep to-night, then?' he demanded, with a look which I well understood.

"'You can easily get a bed at some of the inns,' I returned; 'or, I dare say, you have some friends here, who would shelter you for a night.'

"'Are you really in earnest?' he observed. 'I know some of your set are desperate devils—but, surely, they wouldn't think of——besides, if I go by the coach, what opportunity can they have?'

"'You have a long lane to pass up, after you leave the coach,' I replied, gasping for breath, as much at

terror at the length I was going, as horror at the thoughts that crowded upon me.

"His ruddy face changed instantly to a deadly pale—'The rascals!' he exclaimed, 'I see it all now—as plain as a pike-staff; they've laid a plan to murder me in the lane—they that I've given victuals, and drink, and lodging to—but I'll never harbour one of the vagabonds again, as long as I live. No, if ever one comes within sight of my house again, if I don't set the mastiff upon them, may I be——'

"'Hush! hush!' I whispered, for at that moment I saw one of my female associates advancing towards us, 'for heaven's sake,' I added, 'do not betray that I have given you this warning, or I shall be——'

"'Come along with me,' he exclaimed, seizing my hand, 'you have saved my life! I am sure you have, and I'll never see you want, as long as I live! My wife, too, she has often pitied you, and said you were too good to be among such a crew—and I'm sure, when she hears what you've done for her, she'll cherish you like her own sister! My poor wife, my dear little ones, too, they'll have reason to bless you, as long as they live! Come, I will find a place where you can stay to-night, and to-morrow you shall go home with me. There's plenty of work for you to look after the little ones, and you told her that you wouldn't mind work, if any one would employ you.'

"'I dare not, I cannot accept your offer,' I observed; 'for that would at once betray to my companions that I had prevented their plan—besides, my father——'

"'Ah, that old villain! he, too, I suppose, is in the plot! I know now why he asked me so particularly about the

coach—but I don't know what hinders me having them all taken up at once—it would be the saving, perhaps, of many an honest man's life and money!'

"'Oh no, no—for mercy's sake, do not reward me thus, by making me the means of betraying my father!' I wildly exclaimed. 'He does not, indeed he does not, know anything of their plans! How could he, when you know he has never been out of your company, since you entered the booth?'

"'That's true,' he replied; 'well, well, don't frighten yourself—I won't do any thing you don't approve of—but you must come with me, now—I must have some further talk with you; if you won't go home with me, I must see what can be done.'

"The woman, whom I have before noticed as approaching towards us, had passed on at some distance, without appearing to observe either me or my companion.

"I felt more than half inclined to accept his friendly offer—but I recollected my father! He would, perhaps, be suspected of having leagued with me in betraying his associates, and they would wreak their vengeance upon him; or, if they did not, what would his life be without me? To my exertions he was indebted for many comforts which his companions never knew, or never appreciated. I had kept him from sinking into the squalid, filthy wretchedness of appearance, which they either were forced into from necessity, or adopted from choice, as rendering them greater objects of compassion. I could not be so selfish as to leave him, and I shook my head mournfully, as I withdrew my hand from the rough grasp of the honest farmer.

"'You won't go with me, then?' he exclaimed. 'Well, I'm sorry for it—very sorry—because I'm sure you'd be a good deal better off than with such a set of cut-throat ruffians! But, however, you shall not go without something to show that I am thankful for what you have done for me.'

"He drew out his heavy canvass purse, and untied the string. At that moment, the woman, who, I thought, was entirely out of sight, glided quickly up, and stood close behind him, without his observing her.

"I understood, too well, the meaning of the glance which she cast first at me, and then at the money; but I knew not how to act—I dared not even make a signal to him, for his eyes were fixed on the bag, from which he drew a couple of guineas.

"'And after all, now,' he observed, holding them between his fingers, and fixing his eyes stedfastly on my face, 'if you should be only deceiving me, for the sake of getting——'

"'Oh, no, no,' I interrupted him, hastily; 'I won't deceive you—there's Moggy, behind you—she'll answer for me, that I'll be there—as I've promised—I never deceive such generous gentlemen as you.'

"He seemed for a moment puzzled, but he looked at the woman, and comprehended me.

"'Well, if you deceive me, I'll never trust woman again,' he observed, in the same tone of levity which I had adopted. 'But I must go, or the coach will go without me. Give us a kiss, and mind and don't fail!'

"I did not refuse the parting salute, and he contrived to whisper——

"'If you'll accept my offer, come to the Lamb and Lion, and ask for me, before it is too late.'

"He walked away whistling, and striding along as if in a great hurry to make up for lost time.

"I turned back towards the race-course, and the woman, who was an old enemy of mine, walked for some moments in silence by my side.

"'You've made a tolerable day's work of it, Miss Nell,' she at length observed, fixing her keen eyes on my face.

"'Yes, pretty well,' I replied, laughing; 'but if you hadn't come up, I should perhaps have done better—for, in the humour he was in, I might perhaps have got it all.'

"She shook her head maliciously, but uttered not a word; yet her silence was sufficient—I saw that she suspected me, and my heart sank with fearful anticipation of what was to come.

"'And, pray, where are you going now?' she demanded; 'you recollect there are some that hav'nt been so lucky as you, that are without supper to-night!'

"'I have not forgotten it,' I answered, 'but you can't be surprised that I should go to look for my father first.'

"'Oh, no, to be sure,' she replied; 'and so, then, he don't know of this windfall?'

"'No, certainly,'—I shortly answered, 'but you may as well take this, and get what you like in the town, while I look for him.'

"She snatched eagerly at the bait, and walked off, desiring me not to be long—for they were all too hungry to wait for me.

"I had now time to consider what I should do—should I, at once, acknowledge to my father how I had

acted, and take his advice as to the future? I knew the story that had (I hoped) passed current with the woman, would not deceive him. I knew, too, that, except in one awful instance, he had ever been decidedly opposed to any scheme of his lawless companions, which included the possibility of murder. In short, I determined to reveal the whole truth, and run the risk of his resentment.

"I did so, and was loaded with reproaches for not having before consulted him.

"'I might have made that man a friend for us both,' he observed; 'and, through his means, have been enabled to carry into effect a plan that has long been in my mind, of getting out of the kingdom, and——'

"'It is not too late, perhaps,' I hastily observed, 'I know where to find him.'

"My father consented that I should seek the Lion and Lamb, and see what I could do with my new friend; but it was nearly two hours before I could discover the house, which was better known by some name (I forget what) which it had formerly borne, and was quite at the opposite extremity of the town; and, when I did find it, I learned, to my infinite disappointment, that the farmer had gone to rest some time before.

"What was now to be done? We had been too long absent from our companions, not to raise suspicions of something unusual, and my conversation with my father, during the time we had been together, had excited feelings in his bosom which had long lain dormant.

"'I will not go back to them, Elinor!' he exclaimed; 'they will be certain to suspect us, when they find their expectations defeated. I have made up my mind, I will

not go back—we cannot be worse off without them, than we have been with them.'

"You may be sure I said all I could to strengthen this resolution—but whither were we to go? I had about five shillings (the fruits of my evening's exertions), besides the guinea in my possession; but this would not carry us to London, which, my father suggested, was the best place to elude the vengeance of the gang for a time, unless we travelled on foot, and then they might pursue and overtake us.

"We were standing near the gate of the principal inn, while we debated the course we should pursue, when two gentlemen passed us, arm in arm. The younger looked at me, and made some light remark——

"'That is Delaney's voice, I will swear!' exclaimed my father.

"It was Delaney—but I saw that he would fain have avoided the recognition, had he been able. My father, as briefly as possible, explained our destitute situation; he, in fact, exaggerated it—for he told him we were in want even of the means of getting a shelter for the night. The elder gentleman had walked in to the house, while we were talking—but he speedily returned.

"'Come, Mrs. Delaney is waiting for your coming in to supper,' he observed; 'I shall tell her, if you don't make haste, that you are with a female, and a devilish pretty one, too,' he continued, coming close to me, and staring me in the face.

Delaney had drawn my father aside.

"'Do not, for heaven's sake, betray my connexion with you,' he observed. 'Here is something for the present—and, to-morrow morning, I will see you, and talk further of what can be done.'

"He put a few shillings in my father's hand, and hurried away. Oh, how my heart leaped, when I heard my aunt named—she was the only female relative that had known me in my infancy—she had been the bosom friend of my mother, and she was a mother herself. Surely, she would feel for the poor destitute Elinor—she would pity and protect her!

"My father procured a lodging for us, for the night—and I passed the whole of it in anticipating the result of the interview, which I expected would take place in the morning. I would be content to remain with her as her servant—I would submit to any thing, any restrictions, to be placed under her protection, and to spend my future years with one whom I could call my friend. She could not—I was sure she could not—abandon me again to the world.

"My father was less warm in his anticipations. She was *his* sister, and he felt that he had no right to expect much from her.

"The morning came at last, and, though with fear and trembling, lest we might be met by any of the gang whom we had quitted, we hastened to the inn.

"They had quitted it at day-light, on their route to Ireland; and a note from Mr. Delaney, advising my father to quit England altogether, and thus avoid danger to himself, and disgrace to his family, was all they had deigned to bestow.

"My father tore the cold and insulting epistle to pieces, and I wept with disappointment and agony, as I returned with him towards the house, at which we had slept.

"A loud—'Oh, oh! so here you are, both together!' aroused me from my mournful reverie.

"I started—expecting to see some of our late companions—but it was the honest farmer, of whom I had scarcely thought since my meeting with my uncle.

"So thou camest last night, it seems, and I was in bed,' he continued, addressing me. 'Well, and what did'st want, my girl? wilt accept my offer? but I suppose I need not ask, since I see thou art still with the old fox? but, as I told thee before, and I'll stick to it—if thou want'st a home, and art willing to work—for I can't afford to keep thee or any one else in idleness—why, here's my hand, and thee mayst come home with me at once. There's nothing to stop us *now* in the lane, I take it, old one!'

"'I should hope not, sir,' returned my father; 'but, believe me, I knew nothing last night of the design against you.'

"'No, but thou would'st not have hindered it, if thou had'st—speak truth, now?' returned the farmer; 'but hows'ever, I don't want you to own any thing against yourself—but are you willing that yon good girl should go home with me, and quit the bad company she's got into?'

"'We have quitted it,' said my father, emphatically; 'neither her nor I will ever join the gang of wretches we have left, if we starve, as we are likely to do, without some help! Indeed, we dare not—for by this time they know that we have been the means of defeating their plans, and——'

"'Od's life, man, don't say *we*,' said the farmer, gruffly; 'for I don't think I owe much to your good will; and as to help——but come, I will give you a breakfast, though I suppose I shall be jeered at for my pains, and then we'll talk further.'

"I followed them with a heavy heart—for I knew my father too well to believe that he would be satisfied with the friendly assistance that the farmer seemed inclined to afford us—I feared, in fact, that he would overreach him, in some way, and I wished—oh, how ardently I wished—to preserve the good opinion even of *one* human being!

"The farmer ordered breakfast at the house at which he had slept; and my father proceeded to tell his lamentable tale.

"As I suspected, it was a long tissue of falsehoods; and though I had heard them repeated a dozen times or more before, I blushed with vexation and shame now, as the good man, in his rough and blunt manner, expressed his sympathy for the misfortunes which had reduced an honest man to such a wretched course of life.

"'And so, you say, you've got friends in Ireland, if you could get there? and you're sure they'd help you, if you could get to them?'

"My father assented, adding that he had no doubt he should be able, at no very distant period, to repay any one who would assist him with the necessary means to get there.

"'And how much would take thee there?' demanded our friend.

"My father pretended to reckon up the amount of the passage, and travelling to the residence of his friends—but the amount startled the farmer, who shook his head, as he replied——

"'Dang it, I'm sorry I'm not a rich man, or I'd give it thee in a minute; but crops have been desperate bad this year, as thou know'st—and next Monday's Martlemas-day, and——'

"'My dear sir,' said my father, in one of his most insinuating tones; 'do not suppose I had the presumption to hope for such a thing. Oh, no—I could not dare, after your generosity to my daughter, last night—I could not expect any further favour.'

"The farmer seemed meditating something deeply in his own mind, which he at length vented aloud in words——

"'Hang it!' he observed, 'I should have lost it all, and my life, too, but for her—and *foive* pounds can't ruin me, and may be the saving of 'em both. If I could be sure, now, that he's telling truth!'

"He looked at me, as if he would read my heart—and hurt, degraded, and wretched as I felt, at my father's systematic adherence to the habits of dissimulation and fraud he had so long practised, I could not refrain from tears. The honest farmer, however, ascribed those tears to a source widely different to that from which they really originated.

"'Hang it all, wench, don't cry,' he observed; 'it cuts me to the heart to see a woman cry, and much more when I know that I am the cause of it. Five pounds, to be sure, is a good round sum; but, hows'ever, I shall be able to make it up again—and it an't like throwing the money away, neither. No, no—if it will do the business for you and the old man, and get you out o' this vagabonding sort o' life, I'm sure it will be well laid out—so, for once, I'll venture and ask my landlord for a week or two's grace, though it's what I never have done, or ever thought to do.'

"He took the money from his purse, looked at it with a sigh, and then put it into my father's hand, observing——

"'There, old boy, I've done as much for you as I would for my own brother—and I hope it will prosper with you, for I should be woundy sorry if I thought you would make a bad use of it.'

"'Never fear,' said my father, eagerly grasping the money; 'depend upon it, you never applied money to a better purpose than this.'

"'I hope so,' returned the farmer, gravely; 'but it is time I was off—the old woman will, I am sure, have been fretting herself to death, for I was never a night away from home before.'

"'Thank God, you *will* return to her in safety now!' I exclaimed, as I shuddered at the thought of the danger he had escaped.

"My father thanked him with apparent warmth, but I could not help observing that he looked at the heavy purse, which the farmer carefully put up in his pocket, with a wishful eye; and I felt thankful, when, after abundance of good wishes and charges to me to take care of *myself*, and look out for a good, steady, and industrious husband to take care of me, he at length departed.

"'I wonder whether any of our folks are in town,' observed my father, after musing for some moments in silence.

"'I hope not,' I replied, emphatically. 'It must now be our chief care to avoid them.'

"'He said he should not pay his rent till next week—did he not?' replied my father, without appearing to notice my observation.

"'And of what consequence is that?' I replied with haste, while a horrid presentiment took possession of my mind.

"'None at all,' he returned, and again relapsed into his musing mood.

"I reminded him, that the sooner we quitted Worcester the better, and tried to draw from him what were his plans for the future—but he was sullen and reserved, though he agreed with me that it would be advisable to make a retreat as soon as possible.

"'I will go and see,' he at last observed, 'what time a coach will start for London—for that will be our best course, and do you remain here, till I come back.'

"I was unwilling to lose sight of him, and would fain have accompanied him—but he was positive, and I dared not persevere.

"Hour after hour elapsed, and he did not return. I dared not venture from the place, lest he might come back and thus miss of me—and in agonies, such as I never but once before experienced, I awaited his coming.

"At last he came, and, as usual, intoxicated—but this I was happy now to see, for it accounted, I thought, for his absence, and quieted the horrid fears which had possessed me during the last few hours.

"He had taken two places for London, by a coach which left in the evening, and every thing now contributed to prove that the terrors to which I had given way were groundless, and my heart beat high with hope for the future, as I took my seat by his side.

"Our journey produced nothing worthy of remark—we arrived safe in London, and desirous of avoiding meeting any of our former *friends*, took a humble lodging at the west end of the town for a few days, until we could fix definitely what course to pursue.

"I now flattered myself that my father's bad habits

and principles were at last likely to undergo a reformation, and, though anxious and uneasy as to the means we must pursue to obtain a living, I was comparatively happy and grateful—most grateful, indeed, did I feel to the kind-hearted being, whose generosity had been the means of rescuing me from such a state of misery.

"Alas, this happiness was destined soon to be destroyed! It was the fourth day only, I think, of my residence in London that a newspaper fell by accident in my way, and almost the first article which my eye rested upon, was an account of the apprehension of some gipsies, for the murder of a farmer in Worcestershire.

"Oh, how my heart sickened, and my blood chilled—It was my friend Goodwin! I saw his name, and with difficulty preserved my senses to read the appalling account.

"They had broken into his house at midnight, and had succeeded in reaching his chamber without alarming his servants, who slept at a distant part of the house; but his wife had escaped at the moment of their entrance. He had communicated to her the danger which my intervention had saved him from, and of course she was thus enabled, with almost certainty, to point out those who had perpetrated this horrible deed.

"But still my evidence and that of my father was required, and I saw that a warrant had been issued for our apprehension, and a particular description given of our persons.

"At that moment I had but one feeling—I would almost have been content to suffer any punishment the law could inflict, could I but have the satisfaction of bringing to justice the wretches who had committed the

cruel act—but these thoughts were soon succeeded by others of a different nature. I recollected my father's remark, after poor Goodwin had left us, and how fearfully I had connected it with his subsequent absence—I had every reason, too, for believing that he had seen some of the gang during that absence, and I joined with this several mysterious expressions during the last few days, which were now fearfully elucidated. Yes, there could not be a doubt that he had suggested that which they had so dreadfully consummated.

"In the midst of these reflections he entered, and without speaking, I put the paper into his hand.

"'I know it all,' he observed, with coolness, but without seeming to dare to raise his eyes to mine; 'and I came to tell you that we must not delay a moment my project of going out of the kingdom.'

"'I will not go!' I exclaimed, with firmness; 'on the contrary, I will immediately give myself up, and if my evidence can convict the murderers——'

"'And do you then remember in what predicament you stand yourself?' he interrupted. 'Do you recollect that you are yourself proscribed as a murderer? the worst of murderers!—I know what you are going to say—you are conscious of your innocence;—but will that avail you? It *shall* not avail you!—Mark me, it *shall* not—if you act in the manner you threaten, I will not be the only victim of your folly and rashness!'

"I knew too well his determined disposition, to believe that he would not act up to his assertion, and I was obliged to submit to whatever he proposed; but from that moment he became an object of horror and disgust in my eyes—I saw that he would sacrifice me without

remorse to his own safety, and the last lingering remains of tenderness in my bosom seemed extinguished for ever.

"We went to France—I was hopeless, reckless alike of the present or the future——But I will not weary you with a detail of the means which we adopted, or the miseries we endured, in the next two years; but pass at once to the period when my heart, which had long seemed dead to all natural feelings, was once more awakened and made susceptible of the liveliest and tenderest emotions.

"We had failed in every effort to procure an honest living;—like Cain, it seemed as if a mark was branded on our foreheads, to cause us to be shunned by the whole world—and, driven by hard necessity, I had been compelled to resort to the same precarious mode of subsistence, which I had practised in England.

"In the course of our wanderings, we had reached Lausanne in Switzerland, and reaped, from the credulity of the English, of whom there were a great number resident there, a more plentiful harvest than we had known for some time.

"My ostensible occupation was selling small baskets, which I had learned to make very neatly; but these only served as an introduction and an excuse for my admittance to those who would have blushed to acknowledge that they listened to the idle divinations of a fortune-teller.

"At my own lodgings I was constantly visited by troops of inferior dupes, chiefly servants, who were as anxious as their mistresses to hear my prognostications of their future fortunes.

"There was one, in particular, who had visited me

several times; and, as she seemed rather dissatisfied, and doubtful as to the extent of my skill, from my being unable to answer some of her numerous inquiries—and as I was conscious she might do me much injury, by insinuating her doubts to others, I set my father to work to find out what family she lived with, and, if possible, gain some information respecting her former life, by which I hoped to create in her a high opinion of my power.

"It was some days before he succeeded, for she had been so guarded that I never could extract from her any information, but that she lived with a lady of fortune, with whom she had come from London; and I guessed, by her never visiting me but on a particular day in the week, that she resided at some distance, and only came to the town to make some necessary purchases for the ensuing week. But at length he traced her to a beautiful retirement on the borders of the lake. Imagine my feelings, my dear son, when he informed me that the name of the family was Levison, that they came from Cumberland, that there were three children, and that the age and description of two of them exactly corresponded with those of mine. The lady, in whose service the girl, who had been the primary object of his inquiries, was living, was the maiden sister of Mr. Levison. The latter, too, was unmarried, and, respecting two of the children, all seemed enveloped in mystery. The other was known to be Mr. Levison's nephew—the son of a lately deceased brother; but the two youngest, the girl and boy, both called him papa, though it was believed he had no claim to that title.

"Such was the information which my father had

gained from a French servant, with whom he had contrived to get into conversation.

"Oh, how my heart throbbed with mingled feelings of pain and ecstacy. I could not—I would not doubt that they were my children—and my whole thoughts were absorbed in devising how I should see them.

"My trade afforded me a ready plea for visiting the house, and it would be hard if I could not contrive to hover about it, until I could catch a sight of them; and, for once, I bade defiance to my father's advice and commands, and, without a moment's delay, set off for the house, the situation of which I perfectly remembered.

"My plan succeeded, even beyond my expectations. The children saw me from the windows with my light burthen, and I was immediately sent for into the hall. I saw the kind, good-humoured old lady come from an inner room, dragged forward by the smiling impatience of the blooming girl, and followed by two beautiful boys, whose looks were directed with more curiosity towards me than my wares; but I saw no more, for my senses deserted me, and I fell on the floor."

"Oh, well, well do I recollect that circumstance," observed Denzil; "well do I remember our terror at your supposed death—for such we thought it—and our childish wonder at your recovery, after we had ceased to expect ever to see you open your eyes again."

"Yes, I did open my eyes again," she continued, "opened them to see the faces which had often appeared to me in my dreams, like pitying angels mourning over my degradation, now beaming upon me in reality, with the tenderest pity and compassion. The little girl looked alarmed, but you—oh, never, even till this hour, have I

forgotten the soft warm pressure of your hand, as you laid it on my arm, and whispered to me, to know if I wanted money or victuals, for you would give me all the money you had, and your aunt would give me some nice victuals!

"I know not what I said in reply to you, but my incoherence alarmed the benevolent old lady, who tried to draw you away from me, while she, in a half whisper, observed——

"'Poor thing! her head is unsettled; she wants rest. You must not tease her, my dear child; she shall lie down on Sarah's bed for an hour or two, and then we shall see how she is, and what we can do for her.'

"Sarah was summoned; and the girl who had been the means of my discovering the happiness that was in store for me, made her appearance. She looked frightened and astonished, when she discovered for what purpose she was wanted; but I saw that I need be under no apprehension of her betraying what she knew of me, for she appeared terrified lest I should speak to her before her mistress, and trembled as she assisted me to her room, whither the good old lady followed, having first given directions for a basin of wine-whey to be prepared for me. Tears—the first tears I had shed since my last interview with poor Goodwin—came to my relief, and, having charged Sarah not to tease me with questions, and seen me take her prescription, the old lady left me, recommending me to try to sleep.

"'Good heavens!' exclaimed the girl, as soon as her mistress was out of hearing, 'what can have brought you here? If my master should come home, and find out what you are, and that I have been with you, I shall be

turned out of doors, and you will be sent to prison, for an impostor and a vagabond; for he has such a mortal hatred for all such as you, that I do believe he would hang you, if he could!'

"I shuddered at her words—'He will not find it out, if you do not betray it yourself,' I replied; 'for no one else knows me. But I shall be gone, I hope, before he returns—for I heard your mistress regretting to you that he would perhaps be absent the whole day, and she was always afraid of doing anything without his advice, lest he should blame her, and think she was imposed upon.'

"'Good heavens! then you understand English,' she replied; 'and here I have had so much trouble to make you understand me, though I fancy I speak French uncommonly well, considering the time I've been learning, which is only a little more than a year.'

"I was taken by surprise, but I warded it off by saying, with a mysterious look——'Think you, then, that I, who can read the language of the stars, am unable to understand any language which mortals can speak?'

"I saw she was awe-struck, and I continued——'I have much of great importance to communicate respecting yourself—but first tell me who are those two lovely children who call your mistress, aunt. If I mistake not, there is some melancholy mystery connected with their destiny—either past or to come!'

"'I will tell you all I know,' she replied; 'and that is but little, for it is only from half words that I've caught from my mistress—but I believe they're both *love-children*, or something of that sort; the father is dead, and the mother, I believe, is some horrid bad wretch, who is

never to know what has become of them—at least, I know once, when I heard Master Denzil asking my mistress some questions about his mother, and wishing she was alive, and that he could see her, the old lady said, after he was gone—'Poor little fellow! mercy forbid you should ever see the wretch, who was not worthy to be the mother of such a child!'

"'It is too true!' I exclaimed aloud, in agony. The girl looked at me with alarm—'Yes,' I continued, assuming my usual solemn tone, 'I read in the lines of that child's countenance that some circumstances of guilt and misery had attended his birth.'

"'And did you think the same of Miss Fanny?' inquired the girl, with earnestness.

"'I did not note her countenance so minutely,' I replied; 'but she is his sister—is she not?'

"'Oh, yes, his twin-sister——at least, so we suppose,' she replied; 'for my master has often said there was only one hour's difference in their ages.'

"'I am satisfied,' I replied. 'Alas, poor children, they are indeed the inheritors of shame and sorrow! Heaven grant that the sins of their parents may never be visited on their heads! But I should like to see them again, when only you and I are present, I might then be enabled to tell you more.'

"'I hardly dare run the risk,' she replied; 'for my master would never forgive me, if he were to find it out.'

"'Could you not contrive to meet me with them?' I observed; 'for I suppose, you sometimes walk out with them?'

"'Oh, yes, every day,' she eagerly replied; 'and I

should certainly like to know——but what have you got to tell me about myself?'

"My father had learned sufficient of her history for me to make out a plausible tale, both of the past and for the future, to satisfy her; and, fully impressed with the belief of my supernatural knowledge, I found that she would be ready to do anything that I might suggest; but I soon became weary of her importunate questions respecting her own trifling affairs, when my mind was solely intent on the happiness I had enjoyed, and was enjoying—for it was superlative happiness to be under the same roof with my children, and to know that I should see them again and again; and I therefore affected to be overcome with sleep, and begged her to leave me as long as she could, without fear of Mr. Levison's returning.

"This was a caution I needed not to have given her; for the alarm at the thought of his discovering me, almost equalled her curiosity to know all that she conceived it in my power to tell her.

"Sleep, you may be sure, was out of the question with me; and, soon after her departure, I arose and opened the door of the chamber, in the hope of catching the sound of your voice, or that of your sister; but what was my rapture and surprise, when I beheld you both together, stealing on tiptoe towards my room, as if to listen whether I was awake!

"Joy sparkled in your eyes as you beheld me—the dear little girl shrank back apparently somewhat afraid, but you immediately advanced.

"'Oh, I am so glad you are well again,' you observed; 'and I have brought you all my money, and I will get

some more against you come again, and I will save you some cakes, too.'

"'And so will I,' said your sister, 'and if you will come every day, you shall not be ill again for want of victuals!'

"I could not utter a word—Oh, how I longed to clasp you to my bosom—but I dared not, though I ventured to cover both the little hands that were stretched out to me, with tears and kisses; but, in the midst of my emotion, and while you were wondering and half-frightened, a rough voice was heard calling to a dog, and with a loud and delighted exclamation of—'Oh, there is papa! dear papa, come back now! I will ask him for some more money, for the poor woman!' you bounded away down the stairs, at the same moment that Sarah, with a face of alarm, was hurrying up to me.

"'For goodness' sake!' she exclaimed, 'get away before he sees you—for he's such a man to sift every thing to the bottom, and will ask you so many questions, that he'll be sure to find it out!'

"I was as eager and anxious to escape from his interrogations, as she could be to get rid of me; and I hurried down the stairs, and into the kitchen, from which there was a way out through the garden and plantations, leaving Sarah to make excuses for my disappearance.

"From that period I saw you nearly every day for three weeks, and never did you come empty-handed; but my father was not satisfied with my thus exposing myself to risk, without reaping more profit from it.

"He had learned that Mr. Levison spent much of his time in fishing, with his nephew—you were then too young to accompany him so far as he generally went;

and, totally unknown to me, he formed a plan to throw himself in his way.

"I know not—I have never known, nor do I wish to know, *all* that passed between them; but, whatever plausible tale he had told to Mr. Levison in the first instance, he then succeeded in imposing upon him, and getting from him what was to us a considerable sum of money; but his rapaciousness was too often the cause of defeating his wisest plans, and so it was, I believe, in the present instance, though he attributed to me the betrayal of our secret, by my over-fondness for the children, which had excited suspicion in the bosom of the servants, as to my real character.

"Whatever was the cause, I know not, but I *was* suspected, and means were taken to detect me; but my father had a spy in the family, and he received an intimation which gave us time to get off.

"I say nothing of the wretchedness and despair I felt, at being thus again compelled to leave you behind me; but the danger was so pressing, that I had little time, until afterwards, to reflect upon any thing but the means of escaping it.

"We now returned to Paris, but we gave up all hopes of a settled life and habitation, and have continued ever since the same wandering life—sometimes abroad and sometimes in England, as fancy or the hope of superior gain has prompted, until accident again threw you in my way in St. James's Street, and revived those feelings in my bosom, which time and suffering had somewhat blunted."

CHAPTER XV.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good.
Youth, lost in dissipation, we deplore,
Thro' life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore;
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.—COWPER.

LANGUAGE cannot describe the feelings which had agitated the bosom of Denzil, during this narrative; but it was ended, and pity and filial affection banished every other feeling.

"We will never part again!" he observed, as he took the hand of his mother. "Yet, to-night I must return—but to-morrow, my dear mother, I will finally arrange my departure, and ere night you shall see me again."

"Till to-morrow, then," she exclaimed, hastily, "I will bid you adieu—for I hear my father coming; and I do not wish you to meet, at this moment."

Denzil had as little inclination to the interview as she had, and he readily followed her directions to retire into a small closet on the landing-place, until the old man should have entered the room, by which means he would avoid meeting him on the stairs.

The heart of Denzil seemed to chill as he heard him, in passing, inquire "What she had done with that boy?" but the door was immediately closed, and he could only indistinctly hear the hum of their voices. He was open-

ing the closet-door, when the sound of the old man's voice suddenly raised, as if in a violent paroxysm of rage, arrested his footsteps—he stood still to listen, intending to rush into the room, if he heard any thing further; but he had scarcely made the resolution, before a violent scream thrilled through his ear, and his mother, covered with blood, rushed past him and down the stairs, before he could stop her, or make her sensible that he was still near, to assist her and protect her.

As quickly as his trembling limbs would allow him, he followed her down the dark staircase; but she had already reached the street, and had sunk upon the ground, exhausted with loss of blood.

His whole attention was now occupied with her—several people had collected around, and it was discovered that she had received a wound in her neck, apparently from a knife.

It was some minutes before any one thought of securing the person who had assailed her, and then they turned to gaze at each other, and to inquire who had done the deed.

Denzil's pale face and violent agitation, pointed him out to their observation, as knowing something of the transaction; but he recollected the threats which Tyrrell had on former occasions uttered against his unhappy daughter, and he feared to speak what he knew. Indeed, he was so much occupied with the situation of his mother, that he saw not the suspicious eyes that were turned upon him, nor heard the whisperings of those who fancied that in his agitated countenance they read the evidence of his guilt.

The unfortunate woman was still in a state of insensi-

bility, and the surgeon, to whom she was conveyed, after dressing her wound, recommended that she should be immediately taken to the Hotel Dieu, adding, that it was barely possible that she might recover sufficiently to identify her murderer.

"But where is he?" he demanded; "has he been apprehended, and delivered into the hands of justice?"

Denzil, who had been anxiously watching the faint signs of life which were visible in the sufferer, raised his head, and looked inquiringly around him; but he comprehended not the mysterious looks that replied to his glance, nor did he observe the surprise and consternation of the surgeon, as the latter listened to the half-whispered communications of several of the by-standers, who crowded together to impart to him the suspicions which the young Englishman's looks and manners had excited in their bosoms.

"Pardon me, sir," observed the doctor, approaching him, "were you present when this unhappy affair took place? and can you give any explanation of who inflicted the blow, or what was the motive that prompted it?"

"I was not present," returned Denzil, in a faltering voice; "I was quitting the house, at the moment she rushed into the street."

"Then she must have passed you on the staircase," observed the surgeon; "did you then discover that she was wounded?"

Denzil remained silent—he did not like to acknowledge that he had been in concealment on the stairs; he considered the observation of the surgeon as merely prompted by curiosity, and he therefore resumed his care and attention towards the object of his anxiety, without appearing to notice the remark.

The doctor, however, returned to the attack——"Excuse me, sir, it is absolutely necessary that I should ask some questions—Have you known this poor creature, before to-day?"

"Yes," replied Denzil, abruptly.

"Then your visit in that house had been paid to her?" returned the interrogator.

"Certainly," said Denzil, in the same laconic tone.

"Pardon me—it is odd—and yet, you say, you know not any of the circumstances connected with the melancholy affair?"

"I said truth," replied Denzil; "but I do not see what necessity there exists for your wasting your time in questioning me, sir, when your patient requires all your attention."

"But *I* see the necessity, sir," returned the surgeon, angrily; "and I will tell you at once, candidly, that your conduct appears exceedingly suspicious; and that you will certainly be obliged, for your own vindication, to answer these questions very differently, unto those whom I shall think it proper to refer you to."

Denzil started—He saw at once the awkwardness of the situation in which he was placed; and his heart sank at the thought that probably the whole secret of his connexion with the degraded and unfortunate woman, who still laid with scarcely a symptom of life before him, would be revealed to the world.

"What would you have me say, sir?" he observed to the surgeon. "I have told the truth—I had left the room before the altercation took place, which, however, reached my ear—and I was about to re-enter the room, to protect her from violence, when she rushed out, bleeding and wounded."

"Then it was on account of your visit, apparently—I mean, it was jealousy that prompted the wretch, who, it appears, assumed the title of her father, but who——"

"He was her father—he is her father!" interrupted Denzil, indignantly; "undeserving as he is of such a daughter, I will answer it, with my life, that the imputation you would cast on her is false and unfounded!"

"Nay, sir, *I* cast no imputation upon her—I know nothing of her," replied the surgeon; "but as I understood she was a woman of bad character——which is, indeed, pretty evident, from the place of her abode, and the appearance of her associates," he added, in a lower tone, glancing at the knot of women who were crowding around her, all uttering expressions of curiosity and astonishment at an event which, it appeared, they had but just become acquainted with. "As, I say," he continued, "it is very evident to what class she belonged, I scarcely thought it credible that the man, whom you accuse of this crime, was really her father——besides, in that case, what could have been his motives? He must have been well aware that——"

"For heaven's sake, torture me no more!" exclaimed Denzil, unable to restrain his agitation. "I have already said that I am willing to answer any necessary interrogation—but there are circumstances connected with that unfortunate——"

At this moment she opened her eyes—Denzil flew to her, and she attempted to stretch out her arms to him with a smile of affection; but the pain of her wound restrained the effort, and recalled her recollection to what had occurred to her.

She darted a look of horror around her.

"Where is he? what has become of him?" she exclaimed, in a tone that evinced much more anxiety on her father's account, than her own.

"Do not alarm yourself," replied Denzil. "He will, I trust, never again have an opportunity of injuring or annoying you!"

"Where is he, then?" she demanded, with increased emotion. "Speak—oh, speak—tell me where——"

"I know not—he has fled," replied Denzil. "Pray do not be agitated—You will injure yourself, and all depends on your recovery."

"Only assure me that he is safe—that he is not in prison—and I will be—I will do—any thing you may think proper."

"I do assure you, solemnly, that he is not," returned Denzil; "make your mind easy on that subject, and be assured that I am as anxious as yourself for his safety."

"This is strange," observed the surgeon, "the chief anxiety here seems to be for the guilty person—but I do not wish to interfere—these are family concerns, undoubtedly, and I have nothing further to do, except to recommend that my patient here be removed, as soon as possible, to some place where she may have repose and proper attention. If she has not the necessary means to provide for herself, she will be taken care of at——"

"I will undertake to pay for any—for every accommodation that can be provided for her," interrupted Denzil, hastily drawing out his purse. The surgeon darted a keen glance at the gold, and his manner, which had before been rather *brusque* and abrupt, instantly assumed a different tone.

"She will require great, very great, indeed incessant

attention," he observed; "and it will be, above all, indispensably necessary that her mind should be diverted from dwelling on what is past. I have never been in the habit of receiving any one into my house—nevertheless, I would not mind a temporary inconvenience, to oblige one whose liberality would no doubt be proportioned to the accommodation afforded. If, then, you are really, sir, so much interested in this poor lady's recovery——"

"I am interested, and I will properly recompense any sacrifice you may make on her account," returned Denzil, eagerly; "and as a security of my future intentions——"

He put the purse into his hands, which the doctor, though he made a show of rejecting, declaring it was quite unnecessary, as he could fully trust to *milord's* honour, safely deposited in his pocket; and in a few minutes Denzil had the satisfaction of seeing the motley group, with whom he had been surrounded, all dismissed, and his mother removed to a respectable and commodious apartment, where she was accommodated with a sofa and pillows, until the "best bed," as the doctor significantly termed it, should be prepared for her.

The tenderness which beamed in the eyes of the unfortunate victim of brutality, alone evinced her gratitude for the arrangements which she heard her exemplary son make for her comfort, while the surgeon was present; but when she was left alone with Denzil, her feelings would have burst forth into words, had not the latter restrained her.

"Why should you think thanks are due to me for performing that which is only my duty?" he observed; "would that it were in my power to efface every trace of past misfortune from your mind, as it will be my

earnest desire and endeavour to guard you from future evil. There is one point, however, on which I deem it necessary to speak, with what, you may think, too much decision, and, probably, harshness! but it is for your own sake—for the sake of your future happiness, your comfort, your respectability—nay, even your personal safety——"

"I know what you are going to say," she hastily interrupted; "I know that you think it just and right that I should be content to deliver up my father to the punishment he has merited—but do not ask it. Do not require of me, what I cannot bear to think of. No, no! shall I, who have for years borne with evils worse, infinitely worse than death—who have encountered shame, poverty, every evil that human nature can suffer to shield him, shall I now——"

"You mistake me," interrupted Denzil, "you totally mistake my meaning. I wish not—indeed it would be folly and madness for me to expect, that you would act so inconsistently with your blind and devoted attachment to that unworthy man, as now to be the means of his destruction. All I would require of you is, that you will give me a solemn promise, that you will henceforward, neither directly or indirectly, hold any correspondence or intercourse with him. I think it more than probable that he will, as soon as he finds that you are out of danger, and that no steps are taken to bring him to justice—I repeat, I think it more than probable that he will again make some attempt to resume his former influence over you. I would not have you harshly turn a deaf ear to his necessities. He is your father, and too forcibly do I feel the sacredness of that tie, to wish you

to act with severity towards him; but, for your own peace and safety, I entreat you solemnly to promise that you will not hold the slightest communication with him, without acquainting me."

"I will not—as I hope for salvation, I will not!" she replied, eagerly catching his hand, and pressing it to her lips.

"Then you are henceforward solely *my* care!" he exclaimed, affectionately returning her salute.

The surgeon at this moment entered the room, and his looks unequivocally expressed his surprise; but Denzil offered neither apology nor explanation; he felt, indeed, none was due to a person who evidently acted only from the impulses of self-interest, and he therefore left him to draw what inferences he thought proper from what he had witnessed.

CHAPTER XVI.

This is the man should do the bloody deed;
The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much-troubled breast.

SHAKESPERE.

HAVING seen his mother comfortably established in her apartment, and being satisfied that she was not in any immediate danger, but that the long swoon in which she had so long lain, apparently on the verge of death, was

as much occasioned by terror as by the wound she had received, and was not therefore, now that her mind was comparatively easy, likely to be followed by serious consequences, Denzil began to think of the necessity of returning home.

Home!—what a train of thoughts rushed into his mind at that word—how soon would he be obliged to relinquish that home again!—to give up the society of those so dear to him, and devote himself to the comfort and happiness of one, who, whatever claims she possessed on his compassion and sympathy, could have no title to his respect—could never, indeed, be beheld by him, without exciting painful and degrading recollections. Fanny, too—what would be her agony and dismay, should she become acquainted with the particulars of her mother's history—with that horrible detail, to which he had, within the last few hours, listened with apparent calmness, but with inward horror and dismay.

"No, no!" mentally exclaimed Denzil, as he slowly retraced his way to the spot where he had desired his servant to await his coming—"no, never shall Fanny's pure and innocent mind be sullied by the knowledge of her mother's misery and degradation! Let her still remain in that blessed delusion which represents her mother to her in the vesture of an angel of light. How often has she, with me, in the romantic dreams of youth and innocence, fancied that the spirits of our parents were allowed to watch, as guardian angels, over our mutual happiness! Alas, could she know——but she shall never know—it shall be my care to keep from her a truth, which would poison her happiness for ever!"

From this train of melancholy reflections he was

aroused by discovering he had arrived at the door of the wretched habitation which had so lately sheltered his mother. He looked round for the cabriolet, which he had desired Ned to bring up in two hours. He knew not how many hours had elapsed, but the moon was shining brightly—all was quiet and still, betokening that the night was far advanced, and neither cabriolet nor Ned was visible.

He was still standing irresolute, (for he felt that his strength was too much exhausted to reach Mr. Levison's residence, which was at the extremity of the city), when a distant sound of voices in contention reached him; and he fancied he discerned that of Ned high above the rest.

In a few moments they approached, and, to his surprise and consternation, he discovered Ned, dragging along a man whom he instantly recognised as the wretched Tyrrell.

"I will force you to tell where he is!" exclaimed Ned. "In that house I left him, with one who, I am afraid, is no better than yourself! There has been some foul play, I know—for there is blood on the floor of the room; and I could make out, from the gibberish of the people in the house, and their holding up their heads and turning up their eyes, instead of speaking out like christians, that——"

At this moment his eye rested full on his master, who had come close up to them, and for a moment he stood paralysed with doubt, astonishment, and joy.

"What is the matter, Ned?" exclaimed Denzil; "surely you have not been foolish enough to suppose——"

"I did—I did!" exclaimed Ned, gasping for breath, and bursting into a flood of tears. "Oh, Lord be thanked that you are alive and well—for I never thought to see you again in this world! And how should I ever have dared to go home and confess to my old master, and Miss Levison, and Miss Fanny, that I had brought you here to be murdered! but you are not, thank heaven for that! —Oh, I should never have had a moment's comfort——"

The old man, of whom Ned had relinquished his grasp, the moment he beheld his master in safety, would now have silently slunk away, but he saw that Denzil's eye was steadily fixed on him; and, assuming a dogged and determined air, he stood still, as if awaiting what the latter might have to say to him.

"You and I are too well known to each other, Mr. Tyrrell," observed Denzil, addressing him in French, "to have any reason for fear on either side; and therefore I shall speak to you without reserve. I know not what motives you may have for lingering in this neighbourhood, where you must be aware you are so well known, that——"

"I did not come here voluntarily," he replied, in a sullen tone; "I had just left the place, where I had remained ever since—since——"

"Since your cruel and cowardly attack on a defenceless woman," rejoined Denzil, seeing him hesitate. "The woman, who has for you sacrificed every thing—who has hazarded body and soul to preserve you, and whom you have recompensed by attempting——"

"Has she accused me?" he demanded, with a malignant scowl—"I know she is living, for I heard that, even in my place of concealment."

"She has not accused you—on the contrary, she is still consistent with that principle which has plunged her into so many crimes and miseries! She is still anxious for your safety—anxious to shield you from the punishment so justly your due—punishment which I feel myself criminal for not delivering you up to, at once; but I pity and sympathise in, while I condemn her feelings towards you—nay, I will go farther—though I feel I am doing wrong—I will assist you to escape that punishment, in the hope that your heart will at last be opened to conviction, and that you will at length be induced seriously to contemplate the awful responsibility with which your soul is charged!

"Your daughter," added Denzil, after a pause, "has told me that there have been moments when you have fearfully felt and groaned under the heavy weight of guilt, which presses on your mind—when you have acknowledged that the miseries you have suffered were but the just retribution of an all-seeing Providence, whose laws you have broken and despised! Yet, even now, there is hope——"

"No, no, no!" groaned the wretched Tyrrell, "torment me not with this vain preaching—I cannot, I will not listen to you," he added, with violence, while his whole frame trembled with a convulsive shudder—"I dare not look back!—I dare not think of the future! Oh, no, no—I am lost—lost beyond redemption! lost beyond hope! my fate is irrevocably sealed!"

Denzil, too, shuddered with horror at the dreadful state of the wretched being before him, and for some moments both remained silent; while Ned, who could not understand one word of what had passed between

them, crept close up to the side of his master, as if apprehensive of some unknown danger.

"This is no place to prolong a conversation such as this," at length Denzil observed; "I feel, too, that I am unable to bear further fatigue and excitation—yet I do not wish to leave you thus—fain would I hope that it is in my power to assist you, to rescue you from the abyss on which you are hovering! I would willingly run any risk, and incur any danger or inconvenience, could I but hope——"

"It is in your power to assist me," interrupted Tyrrell, resuming, in some measure, his usual sullen tone. "I am now without money or friends—without even a home—for the folly of her, whom you have the misfortune to call your mother, in irritating me in a moment of intoxication, when she well knows my passions are ever my masters—has rendered it impossible for me to return to that wretched abode, which, bad as it is, was still a home. It is, therefore, in your power to assist me, if you will."

Denzil instinctively felt for his purse—but in a moment he recollected that he had already disposed of it, and he uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

"I had forgotten that I had already given all I had in my possession to——"

"To Elinor?" hastily interrupted Tyrrell, with fierceness; "and she denied it, too! Yes, I knew it was so—I knew that it was not probable you had left her, without giving her something—and yet she dared reproach me for my sordid, mercenary views, when I——"

"And it was that belief, then, that excited such deadly feelings in your bosom!" exclaimed Montgomery;

while a feeling of the bitterest contempt took place of that unmixed compassion with which he had but a few moments before beheld him.

Tyrrell felt the alteration, and his voice and manner became immediately humbled.

"It was not altogether that," he replied; "but she told me that she had betrayed to you that which—which——"

"Which you were no doubt anxious to conceal," returned Denzil, with emphasis, "but you ought to have known your daughter too well, to believe that she would betray you. You ought to have felt that it was natural she would vindicate herself to her child, though she has undeservedly borne from the world——"

"I ought, I ought!" exclaimed Tyrrell, in a tone of conviction. "I do feel that she has been——but I was irritated and made furious with the liquor I had taken, and rendered still more so by her refusing me what I asked—denying that she had received any thing from you—and denying it, too, with the most cutting reproaches."

"She spoke the truth—I had forgotten to give her that which I had purposely provided for her necessities, and which I have since disposed of, to secure her proper attention, in the dangerous state in which your violence has placed her."

Tyrrell's fierce scowl relaxed——

"I owe her much—certainly, certainly," he observed, as if communing with himself; "she has done more for me than ever——but I can in some measure requite her, were I placed in safety, were I but sure that she would—" He looked up at Denzil, who had been attentively watching the workings of his dark countenance, but was

unable to draw any inference from the obscure hints which he threw out.

"You certainly owe her every reparation in your power," observed the latter; "and, as far as your safety depends on her, or as far as I can ensure it, I will pledge myself you shall not be injured."

"I will not detain you longer, now," replied Tyrrell, who had seemed to be deep in thought during this observation. "You have no money, you say—therefore I must shift as well as I can, for this night; and, if you will say where you will see me to-morrow——"

"You had better appoint some place yourself," interrupted Denzil; "you are better acquainted with the localities of the place than I am, and know best where you dare venture with safety to yourself."

"But you said she had not accused me," he replied, looking suspiciously at Denzil.

"I said the truth," returned the latter; "but, I will tell you candidly, that there were those present who knew your character, and did not hesitate to fix——"

"I understand you," he returned, with a gloomy look. "Well, it cannot be helped now—it is done—and cannot be undone!"

Again Denzil pressed him to appoint a place for their meeting.

"I suppose I shall not dare to show myself in the daylight?" he observed, in a sullen tone; "and what I shall do with myself all day, without a farthing of money——"

Denzil recollected himself. "I have some silver," he observed, putting his hand into his waistcoat pocket; but again he was disappointed, for he had given it all to a

poor woman, who, with three or four squalid children, had implored his compassion, as he alighted from the cabriolet.

His only resource now was to apply to Ned, who very reluctantly, when he understood for what purpose it was to be applied, produced a few francs, which Tyrrell received with an expression of abject gratitude, that excited in Denzil's bosom mingled pity and disgust.

"Now, then, you can tell me where I shall see you?" he observed.

Tyrrell meditated a moment——

"You recollect the spot where you witnessed my interview with that villain, Delaney?" he observed.

Denzil replied in the affirmative.

"Then, to-morrow, at dusk, if you do not find me there, you shall meet some one who will conduct you to me. I am——it is of no use to say what I am—but in this instance you shall not have to say that I have deceived you, or that I am totally incapable of gratitude."

CHAPTER XVII.

"I sought for glory in the paths of guile;
And fawn'd and smiled to plunder and betray,
Myself betray'd and plunder'd all the while;
So gnaw'd the viper the corroding file:
But now with pangs of deep remorse I rue,
Those years of trouble and debasement vile."—BEATTIE.

COMPLETELY exhausted in mind and body, Denzil with difficulty, even with the assistance of his servant, reached the place where the latter had left the cabriolet. It was considerably past midnight before they arrived at home, and Denzil felt himself at a loss how to account for his unseasonable absence, at such an hour.

He was still debating the circumstance in his mind, when Ned remarked that he supposed his old master and the ladies were pretty well frightened out of their wits by this time.

"We shall soon relieve their fears," replied Denzil; "but I am puzzled what account we are to give of ourselves—for they must not know the real truth of the case."

"I will manage it all, if you will leave it to me, sir," replied Ned; "only don't you speak to them at all, but let me answer them, and go straight to-bed."

Though possessing no great opinion of Ned's talents or address, Denzil was very willing to avoid, if possible, the unpleasant necessity of replying to the questions which he knew would be asked; and he therefore readily

assented to his proposal, again charging him to be careful not to betray anything that had passed.

To his great surprise, however, no one, except the porter of the hotel, was up to receive him; and on inquiry, he learned that the family had retired to bed at their usual hour, without any direction having been given respecting him, or any anxiety expressed to be informed of his return.

Denzil felt surprised and uneasy—something, he was convinced, must have occurred to induce this show of indifference; and, with a new subject for perplexity and uneasiness, he retired to bed.

Wearied and exhausted as he felt, from the harassing events of the preceding evening, and the consequent deprivation of sleep, Denzil was the first at the breakfast-table, and in considerable anxiety he awaited the appearance of his friends.

At length, Mr. Levison entered the room, alone; but, instead of expressing either pleasure or surprise at seeing him, he replied to Denzil's salutation with formality and coldness, and seating himself at the table, contrary to his usual custom, commenced making his breakfast.

Denzil was astonished and confounded—involuntarily his eyes were turned to the door, expecting to see either Miss Levison or Fanny; but they came not, and at length he ventured to inquire whether they were well.

"Yes, sir, perfectly well," was Mr. Levison's laconic answer.

Denzil for some moments remained silent—but he reflected that, in so doing, he was tacitly acknowledging the justice of that resentment which, it was plain, dictated Mr. Levison's extraordinary reserve, and he therefore resolved to demand, at once, an explanation.

"What have I done, my dear, sir," he observed, "to occasion this change towards me, since yesterday? The mere circumstance of my having been unexpectedly and unavoidably delayed last night, to an hour inconsistent with your regular habits, is not——"

"I do not wish to interfere in any degree with your engagements, Mr. Montgomery," interrupted Mr. Levison, with assumed indifference. "You are your own master—and I have no right to interfere, either with your hours, or the way in which you may please to dispose of them; but, though I must not dictate to you, you must allow me to be the best judge of my own family affairs. I do not choose the female part of my family should associate with improper company."

"Improper company!" repeated Denzil, blushing with surprise and vexation. "Do you mean, sir, to say that I am improper company?"

"I *do* mean to say, that any young man, possessing such effrontery as to leave this house, the moment he rises from a bed of sickness, to repair to a scene of vice and debauchery, and can return at morning light to a peaceful and regular family, must be improper company for modest females."

"That is not my situation, sir," returned Denzil, with firmness. "I left this house for no such purpose,—nor did I pass my time in any such manner."

"Will you look me in the face, and say that you did not drive from here direct to a house, the noted resort of——"

"I am not prepared to enter into any explanations of where I went last night, sir," interrupted Denzil; "but I again explicitly and solemnly deny that I either went

or remained for any purpose of which I have reason to be ashamed."

"I will tell you what it is, Mr. Denzil Montgomery," observed Mr. Levison. "I have ever acted towards you in a manner to deserve your confidence; and I consider myself treated with great disrespect, in the mystery you have chosen to assume towards me. We cannot live together on such terms—but there are other matters in your conduct, with which I am dissatisfied."

"I am willing to give you every satisfaction, sir, in my power. It is as much my inclination as my duty so to do," replied Denzil, in a submissive tone. "Inform me, then, what part of my conduct displeases you, and I will, if possible, remove the cause of complaint."

"Excuse me, sir," returned Mr. Levison, with emotion; "you must have been sensible, I am sure, that when I so far yielded my own feelings to your happiness, as to bring Fanny Levison here, I expected proportionate gratitude and joy on your part. I did not expect that she was to be treated with contempt and contumely, or that you would prefer, to her society, that of an abandoned woman; or that——"

"You are mistaken, sir—indeed you are mistaken!" exclaimed Denzil, with great agitation. "I have never treated Fanny with contempt—she is dearer to me than my existence, but——"

"But what, sir?—why do you not proceed?" interrupted Mr. Levison, in a stern tone.

"You are undoubtedly aware, sir, that I am now perfectly acquainted with the unhappy circumstances connected with my birth and Fanny's——"

"Quit the room, sir! instantly, quit this room!"

vociferated Mr. Levison, starting up from his seat. "Leave me this instant—leave me, presumptuous and ungrateful villain, lest I forget——"

Miss Rachel rushed into the room—"Brother, dear brother——Denzil, for heaven's sake, what have you said—what have you done, to occasion this?"

Denzil was about to speak—but the violence of Miss Rachel's pathetic entreaties that he would leave the room, at length prevailed, and reluctantly he retreated into the adjoining apartment, determined to await the success of Miss Rachel's attempts to calm her brother's passion.

An hour, however, elapsed, without his being summoned, as he expected. His first emotion had been sorrow, at having unwarily excited such feelings in the bosom of one whom he so sincerely respected;—but, the more he reflected, the more unreasonable did it appear, that Mr. Levison should give way to such violence, upon a subject on which he certainly was much less interested than he (Denzil) himself.

"If it is painful for him to recollect those unhappy circumstances," he exclaimed, "how much more reason have I to feel them! Yes, he is unreasonable, unjust! he is more—for his conduct is absurd, and irreconcileable with common sense!"

Satisfied with himself, that he was not to be blamed, Denzil withdrew to his own room, in full expectation that if Miss Rachel failed in convincing her brother of his folly and rashness, he should at least be visited by, or have some communication from him; but another hour passed away, and he remained unnoticed; and, angry and provoked, he resolved no longer to delay his intended visit to his mother, whom he had promised to see as

early as possible. With this intention he rang for Ned, to assist him in making the necessary preparations.

The first sight of the countenance of his servant told him that something extraordinary had occurred, and he instantly demanded what it was?

"Nothing has happened to me, sir," replied Ned, promptly; "but I am struck all of a heap, as I may say, to think that my old master and the ladies are going off at a moment's notice, and we are to be left behind—though I made up my mind that we should never be parted again, but all go back to England together."

"And are they going back to England?" demanded Denzil, in astonishment.

"I can't make that out," returned Ned; "nor I don't think they'll let us know, if they can help it any way—for Sarah says that Miss Fanny don't know, even if Miss Rachel does, and she ar'nt sure of that. But Miss Fanny is crying her eyes out, and Miss Rachel, though she is so busy packing up that she has hardly time to breathe, seems to be in terrible trouble and anxiety."

Denzil remained for some moments totally lost in astonishment and perplexity.

"Surely, surely," he exclaimed, "there must be some mystery in this, that I do not comprehend! It can never be, that my simple allusion to circumstances with which I ought long since to have been acquainted, and which he ought himself to have communicated to me, has given rise to this violent resentment."

Convinced that if he suffered Mr. Levison now to depart without seeking an explanation, no other opportunity was likely to arise, of reconciling himself to him; and pained beyond measure at the idea that he should

part with his benefactor for ever, in resentment—resentment, too, which he was not conscious of deserving—he wrote a few hasty lines to Miss Rachel, entreating that she would intercede with Mr. Levison to see him, and despatched Ned to watch an opportunity of giving it into her own hands.

In a few moments he returned, with an answer written in pencil on the back of the note.

"I cannot see what good purpose it can answer, for Mr. Montgomery to see my brother. Mr. M. cannot unsay what he has said, and every endeavour at explanation will only increase the mischief.—Miss Levison wishes Mr. M. health and happiness."

Denzil's heart sunk, as he read the cold and formal note.

"Then I have nothing farther to hope or expect," he observed, in a despairing tone.

"Poor Miss Fanny," said Ned, "my very heart aches for her—I just caught a glimpse of her, as she sat at the foot of the bed, looking as pale as a corpse; and the old lady's eyes, too, are swelled out of her head with crying—and what it's all about, heaven knows! For, suppose they do think that you have got into bad company, and were a little imprudent last night, as Sarah hinted to me—surely, as I said, such a thing might be passed over for once—and it was not the way to reform you, to leave you altogether to yourself."

"How have they been enabled to form any idea where I was, last night?" demanded Denzil; "surely, you were not so imprudent, as to——"

"I never said a word about it," replied Ned; "an

indeed, I'd no need—for the very first thing Sarah said to me, when I went into the kitchen this morning, was—'Well, Mr. Ned, you and your pretty, sedate, serious master have got home safe, I see! I wonder, for my part, you did not get your throats cut by some of the set you were among!'

"I asked her what she meant," continued Ned, "and I was quite astonished when I found that they were all as well acquainted where we had been, as we ourselves, though they didn't know anything about what had happened, after I left you. Sarah wouldn't downright say so—but I fancy the truth was, that my old master set somebody to follow us; and, indeed, I think I know who it was—that busy, meddling, mischief-making Jacques is the man, or I'm much mistaken!"

Denzil felt that it was of little consequence now, what opinion had been formed respecting his absence—and, equally convinced that it would be useless for him to attempt to deprecate Mr. Levison's resentment, he determined to pursue his purpose of visiting his mother.

The surgeon met him at the door, with a most favourable report of his patient; and Denzil was himself astonished to see the change for the better, that had taken place in her appearance.

But the pleasure and happiness which beamed in her eyes at seeing him, was soon overclouded by the discovery, which she speedily made, that something had occurred to render her son uneasy. Her first inquiry was for her father, and her anxious question whether any thing had been heard of him, recalled to Denzil's mind the engagement he had made to see him in the evening,

which he had, in the hurry of his spirits that morning, totally forgotten.

He repeated to her all that had passed between them, the night before—but, far from seeming rejoiced, at the probability of her being thus released from all fear of his interference with her for the future, the unhappy woman seemed wholly occupied with the idea that some danger would occur to Denzil, in his connexion with him.

"Do not see him, my dear child—do not venture to approach his haunts! You know not half that he is capable of—you know not half the depth of his artifices! Never yet was any advantage offered him, that he did not immediately set his fertile brain to work, to improve it far beyond the intentions of those who wished to benefit him—in fact, to defraud is his constant subject of reflection, and stratagem is as natural to him as the air he breathes. But it is not altogether his guile that I fear—I dread lest something may arise——"

"Dismiss those fears, then, my dear mother," observed Denzil; "forewarned, as I am, of the character of the man, there can be no need of apprehension; and, indeed, in the present instance, I do not believe that there is the slightest disposition, on his part, to take advantage of my wish to serve him. On the contrary, I believe that, if ever he did feel what gratitude for undeserved kindness is, he feels it now!"

She shook her head—"Alas, I know, too well, how evanescent such sentiments are in his mind," she replied; "and I again repeat—be careful, be cautious, and suspect every thing that he says to you, unless your own sense tells you that it is incontrovertibly true; and now,

my dear son, tell me—have you seen Mr. Levison? Does he know——"

"He knows nothing—he will never know it from me! Mr. Levison and I have parted for ever!" he exclaimed.

His mother uttered an exclamation of surprise——"They have not quitted Paris?" she demanded.

"No—but in a few hours they will have done so," he replied.

"And on my account?" she demanded. "Oh, my son, already has my evil destiny began to affect your hitherto good fortune!"

Denzil assured her she was mistaken——"He knows nothing of my having seen you, even," he observed; "nor, indeed, can I attribute his conduct to anything but a strange captiousness, wholly inconsistent with his usual good sense and liberality. But I cannot speak on this subject," he hastily added; "do not ask me to repeat what has occurred—I must try to forget it altogether."

It was near Mr. Levison's usual dinner-hour when Denzil again reached the hotel, on his return from his morning's visit; and, as he passed the room door in which they were accustomed to take that meal, he ventured to look in, in the hope that the preparations for it would announce that the former had changed, or at least delayed his hasty purpose. All there was empty and desolate. He paused at the drawing-room, to listen—but no sound proceeded from thence, and he opened the door. That, too, was vacant, and as he stood wondering, his servant Ned entered behind him.

"They are all gone, sir,—bag and baggage!" he exclaimed; "and where, nobody can tell—for even the postillions did not know which road they were to take, when they mounted their horses."

Denzil received this information with more of sorrow than astonishment. He had anticipated this, and was in some measure prepared for it—but the blow was not less heavy, and for a few moments he felt as if stunned by the certainty that he had indeed parted for ever with his dearest friends.

Slowly and pensively he walked from room to room of the suite of apartments they had inhabited, in hopes of discovering some memorial that they had not left him without an attempt to prove that they still regarded him with kindly feelings—but he was disappointed,—there was not any thing!

"And Fanny!" he ejaculated—"Fanny, with all her grief and regret, it seems, thought proper to adopt the resentful feelings of her father——her father, did I say? Can it be possible that she still considers him as her father? that she is still deceived, as I was——"

A thousand strange surmises darted into his mind.

"Was it possible, after all, that his mother was deceived, and that Fanny was not his sister? Could that account for Mr. Levison's strange and incomprehensible resentment, at his allusion to the subject of her birth?"

The thought acted like an electric flash upon him. He had only his mother's assertion and surmises to oppose to the belief that this, after all, was correct. He recalled to himself all the strange observations, the conflicting circumstances, which he had so often been puzzled to account for, in Mr. Levison's conversations; and all seemed to confirm the conjecture which he had thus suddenly alighted upon.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "and if this should be really the truth—if it should prove that we do not owe our origin to the same parents—how have I blindly

thrown away my happiness, at the very moment it was in my power to secure it."

The subject, which but a few minutes before had seemed of comparatively little consequence, since, if they had determined to abandon him for ever, it mattered little to what part of the world his friends had determined to bend their course, now excited the keenest anxiety in his mind.

"Could he ascertain whither they were gone, he would follow them—he would demand to have his doubts satisfied! Yes, he would no longer be content with dubious and half communications, but would at once boldly demand all that he wished to know, and which, if known, would at once decide his happiness or misery."

"Yes!" he exclaimed, "even if I were forbidden ever to hope that I could become her husband, it would be happiness to know that I dare love her—that I might in secret worship her image—and dwell on the remembrance of those happy hours, in which we vowed eternal fidelity to each other, without guilt and without remorse!"

Vain, however, were all the efforts he made to discover the direction the objects of his anxiety had taken. Every one around him seemed bound by some powerful spell to frustrate his inquiries, and the evening arrived without his having gained the slightest clue to the road they had taken.

A note from his mother, again enforcing the necessity of caution, and entreating him, as soon as possible, to relieve her anxiety as to the result of his approaching interview with her father, reminded him of his engagement with that unhappy man, which he had again

Montgomery, hastily; "neither, could it be accomplished with safety, should I think it advisable, on many accounts. Of this, however, be assured—that you may safely entrust any communication you may have to make to me."

Tyrrell looked disappointed, and for some moments hesitated——

"I know not," he at length observed, "why I should be averse to communicate to you all that I have to say, since my conduct cannot appear in a much worse light than I know it does at present—I understood, from the reproaches which Elinor uttered, that she had not spared me in the detail of her own life, which she thought proper to give you."

The tone of voice in which this was uttered, betrayed to Denzil that Tyrrell felt, even yet, no small degree of resentment at the disclosures his daughter had made.

"Your daughter has felt, and still continues to feel towards you, an affection and kindness which, I will frankly say, I think you by no means deserve," replied Denzil. "Even now," he continued, "her first anxiety was for your safety—her first inquiries of me were directed to that object."

"Poor thing!" said Tyrrell, in a low voice. "Well, Mr. Montgomery," he continued, "a few hours, I trust, will remove that source of anxiety—the communication I have to make, will perhaps effectually erase a feeling which, I confess, she has carried to excess—a feeling which has often caused me no little surprise, when I reflected how little claim I had to expect it. I do not allude to my conduct towards her, which has been often bad enough—but it will, perhaps, lessen its atrocity in

your eyes, when I tell you that I allude to the fact, which I am prepared to substantiate, that she is not my daughter!"

Denzil started.

"Thank God for it!" he exclaimed, with involuntary fervour; "but are you really serious, Mr. Tyrrell?"

"I am speaking the simple truth, sir," replied Tyrrell, "and I trust it will not lessen me in your opinion; and now I will tell you the whole circumstances attendant on her birth.

"Her father was an officer in the army, who was killed in Holland; her mother, a young woman of inferior birth, died in bringing her into the world, leaving her, with a considerable sum of money, in my care. The child was adopted as my own, for I was then just married —but I was, as I always have been, thoughtless and improvident—the money, which was intended for her, was spent, and my hopes of replacing it frustrated. It was this circumstance which induced me to conceal from her her birth—I feared lest she should, at some future time, be induced to make inquiries, and, in consequence, demands, which I could not answer. My wife, too, who had no children, doated upon her, and I conceived I should be doing her no injustice by treating her and providing for her as my own—We quitted Ireland, where she was born, and this favoured the deception. Singular as it certainly was, too, her features and person (aye, and many points of her disposition) bore a strong similitude to my own—and I believe no one who ever looked upon us together, ever doubted the reality of my claim.

"Her father certainly was distantly related to me, and the striking resemblance that existed between us, as well

as my being the only one of the family who countenanced their marriage, was the cause of the poor mother's placing such implicit confidence in me.

"But there is no need of my saying any more on this subject—I have told you all I can tell you, and there," he continued, taking some papers from a small tin case, and giving them to Denzil, "there are the necessary documents to prove what I have asserted. There is the certificate of her parent's marriage—the register of her own baptism—and the will, by which I was appointed her sole guardian; and now I have something else to say to you—which more immediately and personally concerns yourself. You are aware, undoubtedly, of all the circumstances of your birth—but are you aware that there is no legal impediment to your claim to the estates and name of the Levison family? Your mother was lawfully married to Mr. Levison, more than five months before you were born—and it would be difficult, if not wholly impossible, for them to prove anything now that could bar your claim."

Denzil's countenance betrayed the extreme contempt and indignation with which he heard this proposal; and Tyrrell, who immediately perceived it, hastily added——

"This, however, is your business—not mine. But it is also in my power to give you some information on another point—though, perhaps," he added, with an air of sudden recollection, "it might be quite as well if I were to withhold it—since I am by no means assured that you would consider yourself bound by any ties of gratitude, let me act as I would; and I have placed myself at your mercy, in acknowledging that I have no other claim upon you. Indeed, I was well aware, when I acknow-

ledged that I was not the father of Elinor, that I at once obliterated every tie that I possessed either upon her or you!"

"You are mistaken, Mr. Tyrrell," replied Montgomery, with calmness. "The intentions I had formed respecting you, remain unchanged by your communications. I will at once explain those intentions by stating that I will furnish you with sufficient money to quit this country immediately; and that I will appropriate fifty pounds a year to your support, whenever or wherever you shall fix your permanent residence—I say your *permanent* residence; for the only condition I make is, that you totally relinquish those habits of wandering from place to place, for which there can no longer be either necessity or excuse."

Tyrrell was silent for some moments—he was evidently struggling with feelings too powerful for words.

"Forgive my having, for a moment, doubted you," he at length exclaimed. "Your offer is, indeed, noble—it is more, infinitely more, than I had hoped or anticipated—and rely upon my rigid adherence to its terms. I can have no wish, indeed, to act contrary to them—for will it not be a blessed change to have a home, to one who has been for nearly twenty years a wanderer upon the face of the earth! I shall, indeed, miss her whose affectionate cares, ungrateful and undeserving as I have been of them, have so long been my only solace and support! But I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that she is happy—and that she will cease to regard me with those feelings of terror, which, much as I have deserved them, I should feel were infinitely aggravated, had I really borne that relationship to her, which she has always believed."

"The wife?" reiterated Denzil.

"Yes, the wife!" repeated Tyrrell. "Elinor was—*is* his wife; for her subsequent marriage cannot invalidate the first, though it may prevent her enforcing her claim."

"But how could this be possible?" exclaimed Denzil, in great agitation; "did you not yourself avow that her marriage with my father was illegal—a mere farce, performed only to quiet her scruples, and render her subservient to your infamous views?"

"She was persuaded that it was so, certainly," replied Tyrrell, coolly; "but I can prove, beyond a doubt——nay, her husband well knows that that marriage was a lawful one, performed with every rite and ceremony that could make it so. Elinor's credulity and inexperience induced her to believe anything that I asserted—but the colonel knew better; he knew that she was his wife, and he has proved that he considered himself still bound by his obligations to her, by avoiding any second contract, even to this day."

"Is he then living?—and do you know where he is?" exclaimed Denzil, with emotion and surprise.

"I believe he is living," replied Tyrrell; "I know he was, at the time I first saw you in London; for I had then recently seen him. But, though he rejected with scorn and violence my attempt to interest him in my favour, and to profit by the ties existing between us, which I thought he would acknowledge,——though he spurned me from his presence, and threatened me with vengeance, should I again intrude upon him—I do not think he would reject the claims of his son—of one who would do credit to the name and lineage, which I know his proud heart laments will die with him—for he is the

last heir-male, unless your title should be proved, of the house of Alberton!"

"But does he know that he has a son and daughter in existence?" demanded Denzil.

"No," returned Tyrrell. "It was in India that the intelligence reached him of Elinor's marriage with Mr. Levison, and the events which followed it; but the person from whom he learned these circumstances knew nothing, I suppose, of your birth; for in the short communication which I had with him, Lord Alberton (that is now his title,) never once alluded to it—a convincing proof that he was unacquainted with the most important feature of the case."

"And does my mother know that he is living, and in England?" demanded Denzil.

"No, I dared not trust her with that secret," he replied. "I knew that nothing on earth could have prevented her from seeing him—from at once reproaching him for his treachery, and vindicating herself in his eyes; and I felt that my ruin and detection would inevitably follow. The influence I had so long exercised over her weak mind would have vanished, when opposed to his—I doubted not, that, though he could never acknowledge her as his wife, he would effectually separate her from me, and the best that I could have expected would have been abandonment to want and misery. Your promise, which I rely upon with full security, has freed me from this fear, and in return I wish to facilitate, as far as it is possible, your establishment of your rights."

Denzil remained for some time lost in the tumult of hopes and fears, which crowded upon his mind at this extraordinary communication. Could this be real, or

was it a fabrication of this adept in artifice and deception, to secure more firmly his services and assistance?

"But to what purpose," he at length exclaimed, "to what purpose did you impose upon my mother, by representing that the marriage-tie, which bound her to my father, was false and invalid? She had, in the first instance, consented to forego the title of his wife, so long as it should be necessary for his interest to conceal their marriage."

"It is true," replied Tyrrell, casting down his eyes, unable to meet the keen piercing ones of Denzil, which seemed as if they would look into his very soul; "but the chances were greatly against her husband's ever being able to acknowledge her, without certain ruin to his prospects; and I knew that, while she considered herself his wife, she would scrupulously retain her affection and fidelity to him."

"And it was your cool deliberate plan to profit by her renouncing both? In plain language, to make a market of her beauty, and consign her to destruction, for your profit?" exclaimed Denzil, in a tone of the most bitter reproach. "Can it be possible that a heart so base, so villanous, could ever inhabit the bosom of a human creature?"

Tyrrell's dark designing countenance for a moment assumed a fierce and deadly expression of rage, at this open and energetic denunciation of his conduct—but it quickly faded, and, in a tone of deep humiliation, he replied—

"I feel I have deserved this, and much more, from you—but you are a young man, Mr. Montgomery, you have hitherto been a prosperous one—you know nothing

of the humiliation which a proud spirit feels, under the pressure of poverty and contempt, or of the temptations which beset the upright in the gay world, in which I then mingled. Elinor's beauty—her superior accomplishments—and the vivacity of her manners, secured me many friends, and I solemnly declare that, when I first proposed to secure to myself the full benefit of the advantages which her attractions produced, I did not contemplate——but you are incredulous—your looks declare that you do not credit me—well, be it so! My motives now can be of little consequence, they cannot alter facts."

"It can avail little now, indeed, that I should seek to develope your motives, Mr. Tyrrell," replied Denzil, with solemnity, "of those, your own heart must be the umpire; but the awful consequences of the duplicity and selfishness which seem to have been the ruling traits of your conduct, must rise up to condemn you. Even in this world, they have entailed upon you misery and contempt—and, in that eternity which awaits you—which a short, a very short time must——"

Tyrrell started from his seat—a cold dew sat upon his deeply-furrowed brow, and his hands were clasped in agony.

"Do not talk to me of eternity!" he exclaimed; "it is a foolish, idle tale—fit only to scare old women and infants! I have been punished enough for all I have ever done! When have I ever known peace or happiness! From the first to the last, have I not been harassed, tormented, hunted from place to place—preyed on by those who were more crafty than myself—and spurned by those who called themselves more honest—and now

you, even you, from whom I hoped to find comfort, you would embitter your charity to me by preaching to me of a future state—by trying to conjure up to my view the *awful consequences* of my errors. They *were* errors—I know and feel they were—for they have failed in making me what I hoped and expected to be—rich and distinguished; but, for repentance and futurity, they are bugbears!

"'Tales that the nurse and priest hath taught,'"

he continued, bursting into a laugh which, in Denzil's ears, sounded as harsh and dissonant as mirth from a sepulchre.

"I feel it would be presumptuous in me to attempt to convince you by argument of the truth of what it seems years of just retribution have failed to open your eyes to, Mr. Tyrrell," observed the latter, "but——"

"But me—no buts," interrupted Tyrrell, with assumed levity—levity which the ghastly hue of his features, his short laborious breathing, and the irregular and hasty agitation of his step, as he traversed the room, as if in hopes to escape from the images Denzil had conjured up to his imagination—all painfully and impressively contradicted. "I will have no buts on the subject, Mr. Montgomery," he continued, "you must acknowledge I have shewn a strong desire to undo the mischief I admit I have done by my mistaken system. I have humbled myself to the dust before you, in the confession I have made—and I can do no more. Now let us dismiss altogether this subject, and go back to one that, I think, must be infinitely more pleasing to you—and I

am sure much more so to me—the means of substantiating your claim."

"I have very remote hopes of that," returned Denzil. "The man who could be insensible to the miseries of the woman he had once loved, on whom he had bestowed the sacred title of wife—who could remorselessly consign her to poverty and disgrace, without an effort to save her, be her faults what they might—is not very likely, I think, to receive her children with——"

"You are quite wrong in your premises, Mr. Montgomery—Lord Alberton has never rejected Elinor's claims upon his pity or compassion! He has never seen her—nay more, I know that he would have made the greatest sacrifices to have discovered her—to have separated her from me! It was me, and me alone, who was the subject of his wrath—me, whom nothing but the fear of my publishing the connexion existing between us restrained him from delivering to that which he—which men call justice——Justice! Pshaw, the stronger animal ever makes the weaker his prey. It is so through all creation—fraud, force, and cunning are lawful engines in the natural world, and the man who cannot possess the goods of this world by fair means, as they are called, is a fool to neglect——but this doctrine is not agreeable to you, Mr. Montgomery—I beg your pardon—I was observing, that I do not think there is the slightest reason to fear that Lord Alberton would oppose your claims—on the contrary, I have every reason to believe that he would gladly acknowledge them; for one of his most bitter reproaches to me was, that he was destined perhaps to sink into the grave childless, when, but for my machinations, he might have left behind him inheritors——"

"*Pardonnez moi!* you must forgive me!" exclaimed the man, who had been Denzil's conductor, rushing into the room. "*Mon ami*, my very good friend," he continued, addressing Tyrrell, "you must fly—*vite!*—quick! —you have not von littel moment to spare. *Entrez! entrez!*" and, to Denzil's surprise, he hastily removed a large heavy arm-chair, in which Tyrrell had been seated, drew up a trap-door, which disclosed a long ladder so contrived as to lead to the roof of the house, and which Tyrrell instantly ascended, with an agility better suited to the necessity of the case, than his years and apparent infirmities. Then, replacing the chair, and throwing himself into it, the adroit Frenchman snatched up a music-book, which laid on the table, and making a sign to Denzil that he should join, commenced singing, in a loud key——

"Ah, mon pere, si vous," &c.

A loud knocking was at this moment made at the door of the apartment—but he pretended not to hear it.

"*Non! non!* monsieur!" he exclaimed, in a loud voice, "you are wrong—quite—a littel wrong—Attend to me!

"Ah, mon pere——"

The knock was repeated more authoritatively, "*Entrez! entrez!*" he exclaimed, without quitting his seat, and retaining the utmost composure of countenance.

The door was opened, and four *gens d'armes* entered, and cast an eager glance around the room.

"*Mes enfans, bons garçons, que cherchez vous? que voulez vous?*" he demanded, rising, with a look of astonishment.

The men hesitated, again looked around, and then, after surveying Denzil from head to foot, whispered to each other, with a look of disappointment.

"*C'est un milord Anglais, a qui j'enseigne la musique,*" observed the Frenchman. "*Pardonnez moi,* monsieur—I beg you ten, von ten thousand pardons for dis littel interruption—I sal begin *de leçon* over again, in two, three minutes," he continued, bowing obsequiously to Denzil, who sat in astonishment at his presence of mind, and total freedom from all embarrassment either in voice or manner.

"*Eh bien, mes amis, qu'est ce que vous avez dire?*" he resumed, turning to the officers of justice.

The men again hesitated—referred to a paper which one of them carried, and which, Denzil rightly conjectured, contained a full description of the culprit of whom they were in search, and then beckoning his companion to the landing-place, communicated to him, in a low voice, their errand, and the information they had received, that Tyrrell was in his chamber.

"*Ah, ah! mon chambre, le voila, entrez, cherchez!*" exclaimed the Frenchman, in a tone of the utmost apparent candour, and throwing back the door to its utmost stretch, as if to invite their scrutiny.

The men gave another glance around the room—but there was nothing there that could conceal a full-grown cat, much less a tall, athletic man, as Tyrrell was described to be; neither could they suppose that he could, by any metamorphosis, have assumed the shape and features of a handsome youth, such as *milord Anglais* indisputably was; and, therefore, after another parley, in which the owner of the apartment seemed rather less

disposed to be polite, and inclined to remonstrate on the interruption and offence their appearance was likely to give to his pupil, they very deliberately walked down stairs.

The Frenchman shut the door, shrugging his shoulders up to his ears, and walked on tip-toe back to his seat, observing, in a low tone——

"*Oh, mon dieu! mon pauvre ami!*—my good friend! If they should catch him!"

"But he is safe for the present, is he not?" demanded Denzil, who had witnessed this scene with no small degree of perturbation—Bad as he was, and richly as he deserved the utmost vengeance of the laws he had so heinously violated, the wretched Tyrrell excited, at this moment, only feelings of pity and compassion in his bosom; and that he might live to repent, and, as far as it was possible, atone for the crimes he had committed, was his earnest wish and prayer.

He looked earnestly in the face of his companion for an answer to his question—but the attention of the latter was riveted to some noise which appeared to proceed from the staircase, and, with evident symptoms of alarm, he whispered——

"*Ah, mon dieu, ils reviens!* they are coming back—*tout est perdu!*"

The noise, however, passed away—and Denzil, recollecting himself, observed—"It is of no use my remaining here—your friend and you, monsieur, both know where I am to be found, and you will choose your own method of communicating with me."

The man commenced a long harangue, in which his own promptitude, adroitness, and fidelity to his friend,

were intermingled with oblique hints of his own poverty, and his consequent inability to assist his "dear and respectable" friend, Mr. Tyrrell—a theme which was soon converted into the most lavish expressions of gratitude, and assurances that he would devote all his powers, mind and body, to his service, when Denzil slipped a gold louis d'or into his hand; and the latter, heartily rejoiced to escape from his society and unmeaning volubility, hastily descended the dark and dirty staircase, and returned home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

> For she had known adversity,
> Though born in such a high degree.
>
> SCOTT.

THE surprising information which he had received from Tyrrell, had, for a time, banished from the mind of Denzil, the uneasiness he had felt at the sudden departure of his friends; but the sight of the empty apartments, which they had so lately occupied, recalled, in its fullest extent, his regret for this circumstance. He felt, too, how valuable would have been Mr. Levison's advice and assistance, in investigating the truth of Tyrrell's affirmations—for, once satisfied that the latter had finally accomplished his retreat from France, he should have no longer hesitated to reveal to him every particular connected with that wretched individual. It was an absolute duty,

It was not, however, until he had a second time expressed this doubt, that she replied to it——

"Alas, would to heaven that I could reasonably entertain a doubt of his being my father!" she observed; "but——"

"I have reason to think that you have a right to entertain those doubts," interrupted Denzil; "in fact, there are many circumstances connected with your past life, in which I believe you have been grossly misled and deceived; and, be assured, that one, not of the least importance (since it has been the foundation of every other error) has been your believing that man to be your father, and suffering him to usurp an influence over your mind, which——"

"You have received some information from him!" she exclaimed, her eyes kindling with hope and expectation. "Yes, I am sure he has acknowledged——"

"He has, indeed, my dear mother, acknowledged many circumstances which will surprise you, not less than his frank avowal that he has no right to that title of which he has made such a base and vile advantage."

"And he has avowed it, then?" she exclaimed, clasping her hands with ecstasy. "Oh God, of what a load is my heart relieved! But how——tell me, my dear child, satisfy my impatience by explaining——"

As nearly as possible, Denzil repeated, in Tyrrell's own words, his detail of the deception he had practised towards her, from the time she had been committed to his care, and confirmed it by placing in her hands the documents of her birth, which at once obliterated the fear which, during the surprising narrative, she had ventured to express, that this was but a feigned tale—

a remnant of his old habits of cunning and deception, and meant to answer some hidden and artful purpose.

Convinced, however, beyond a doubt, that she was free from all ties to that being, towards whom she had felt a sentiment of abhorrence which his conduct fully deserved—but for which her heart had often reproached her with, as being unnatural towards the author of her being—the unfortunate woman gave utterance to the most fervent expressions of joy and gratitude.

"There are other circumstances," observed her son, "which he has revealed to me, that, although equally surprising with what I have just related, I as firmly believe to be true. I will not keep you in suspense, but at once inform you that they relate to your first, I may say your only marriage—for if, as I believe, nay, as I am convinced, you were legally and indissolubly united to my father, the subsequent engagements you have formed are without doubt void."

Elinor listened to him with breathless attention, as he repeated Tyrrell's affirmation that the ceremony, which had made her at the time so superlatively happy, had been really and duly performed, and that she was still the wife of the only man she had ever loved, or regarded as a husband.

Her replies to Denzil's earnest questions—her recollections of all that had passed at the time, confirmed what Tyrrell had asserted; and her son became convinced that the latter had told the truth, and that his father had in that instance acted consistently with his former character, though he had afterwards deviated from it, lured by the temptations which the cupidity of Tyrrell had thrown in his way, in suggesting the practicability of denying his marriage.

There was nothing, at first view, in this information, which could convey pleasure to the unfortunate Elinor; on the contrary, deep and bitter regret and despair, at the recollection of the insuperable bar which her subsequent conduct had placed between her and the object of her fond affections—the husband of her choice—for a time absorbed all other feelings.

"Of what avail is it to me, to know that I have myself destroyed every hope of that happiness, which I might have enjoyed?" she exclaimed. "How can I rejoice that I am the wife of one, whom I dare not claim as my husband, and who, perhaps, hourly curses the tie which has brought upon him nothing but distress and misery! Oh, with what pride would he now, freed from all restraints, have acknowledged his wife and children, those children who must now bear the stain of a dishonourable birth—who dare not claim their father!—Oh, my son, how can you look upon me without abhorrence, without detesting the wretch who has brought such evils upon you?"

"Because I feel that yours have been errors of the head, not of the heart," replied Denzil, with great emotion; "because I am convinced that circumstances, evil precept, and evil example, have made you what your natural disposition would have led you to avoid. Oh, no—the world may condemn—even he who should have shielded you from every evil, instead of abandoning you to the guidance of one whom he had proved to be a villain——even he may contemn and reject you, but my my mother shall ever find in me an advocate—a friend—a son!"

The tears, which fell in torrents on his hand, which she held fast clasped in hers, alone spoke the gratitude of

the poor mourner; but more tranquil moments succeeded, and with comparative easiness she discussed with him the probability that Lord Alberton would be disposed to investigate and acknowledge the claims of his children, if they were brought before his notice.

Denzil's heart throbbed with violence, as his mother several times alluded to *his sister*, as possessing an equal right with himself to the benefits which would arise from an acknowledgment of their birth.

"Has it ever occurred to you," he at length, with a faltering voice, observed, "I say, my dear mother, has such a thought never entered your mind, as to doubt that Fanny may not be——I mean, that it is possible she is, after all, the daughter of Mr. Levison? I have," he continued, gaining more confidence as he proceeded, "been deeply considering the subject—have been recalling to my recollection many, very many circumstances, which seem to place it beyond a doubt that she is really what she is said to be—his daughter; and that either my sister is no longer in existence, or that she is differently situated. You have no proof of Fanny's being your child, beyond the similarity of ages, and her being under the care of him, who, though he has been a liberal benefactor to me, has never pretended that I possessed any claims of relationship. I cannot, indeed, trace the slightest personal resemblance between either you and Fanny, or between her and me; while, on the contrary, I have often seen a strong likeness in her countenance to Mr. Levison's, especially in her smile, which is the counterpart of his. Her features, complexion, and hair, I have heard him many times say, were the counterpart of her mother's, yet they bear no similitude to yours; besides, he never

saw you, and, surely, he would never deliberately contrive a tale, without a shadow of foundation—indeed, I have other proofs, which lead to a conclusion that she is not your child."

With earnest attention his mother listened to every thing he could urge, to prove to her that which his happiness depended on proving to himself, and which he considered almost fully established by her admitting that she had little to oppose to his statement, beyond, as he had said, the similarity of ages, and the circumstance of nothing being known with certainty of Fanny's birth.

The most conclusive evidence, however, as she observed, was Mr. Levison's resentment, at Denzil's allusion to Fanny's birth; and sincerely did she lament, with her son, that that resentment had prompted the former to such a hasty proceeding, at a moment when a few words might have cleared away all mystery.

CHAPTER XIX.

> Oh, what a sign it is of evil life,
> When death's approach is seen so terrible!
>
> SHAKESPERE.

THE temporary embarrassment which Denzil had experienced from the want of money, had been removed by the friendly intervention of Mr. St. George, who, upon a slight hint from Ned, had called, and without hesitation

proffered his services. He had also exerted himself to the utmost, in endeavouring to discover the road which Mr. Levison had taken; and had altogether shewn so great a disposition to serve him, that Denzil hesitated not to confide to him the interest he felt in the fate of Tyrrell, and his anxiety to forward the latter's escape from France.

To Denzil's great surprise and mortification, he discovered that St. George was almost as minutely acquainted with his connexion with that individual as he was himself; and his countenance forcibly expressed those feelings, as he listened to the advice which St. George gave him, to interfere, as little and as secretly as possible, in the affairs of one whose character was notorious for every species of villany.

"I will tell you, at once," he observed, "how my acquaintance with this man originated, and prove to you, if you do not already know it, that he is totally unworthy of sympathy.

"It will be unnecessary for me to relate any particulars of my early life to you—it will be sufficient that, in my twentieth year, I unexpectedly succeeded to a handsome fortune, by the fortuitous deaths of half a dozen intermediate heirs, who had stood between me and it, and had prevented either me or any one else contemplating it as coming within the scale of possibilities. Some circumstances during my boyhood had introduced me to the family of Mr. Delaney—I will not say it was on a footing of equality that I was admitted to be an occasional companion of the heir of that *respectable* name, to make up one of a set, when the young ladies and their friends wished to form a dance, and to sit at the lower end of

the table, and smilingly hear the jests and sarcasms of my *superiors* at the upper end, which were generally levied at the inconsistency of my threadbare Sunday suit, with the pretensions of my name and family.

"I should never have submitted to all this, but my mother, poor woman, had somehow or other formed great expectations from Mr. Delaney's friendship and high connexions, which he had talked of till I believe he actually fancied he did possess them, and that it entirely depended on him to make my fortune.

"I had never had any thing to complain of in Delaney's personal treatment of me. His maxim that 'civility costs nothing, but may gain something,' always prevented him from the commission of any indecorum; but from the other members of his family, with the exception of Julia, who for some years resided in Dublin with a relation, I had sustained many bitter affronts, which rankled in my heart, and which only my poor mother's prayers and entreaties induced me to smother. But the scene changed —unexpectedly I became the possessor of twelve hundred a year, and the most distinguished guest at Mr. Delaney's table.

"I was young—not naturally revengeful, nor very apt to assign a bad motive for an action, when a good one was pretended——and far from suspecting the Delaneys of sinister views in their patronage of me, and the pains they took to reconcile me to the loss of my mother, who died from excess of joy at seeing her darling son elevated to what she considered his proper rank in society.

"'Habit does much!' I had been all my life so habitu-

ated to look upon Mr. Delaney as my patron and counsellor, that I submitted to his guidance in every point of view—became completely domesticated in his house, left all my affairs to his management, and finally, fell desperately in love, as it was intended I should, with his eldest daughter—the all-subduing, all-accomplished Julia—who was sent for home for the purpose; and, immediately on seeing me, resolved on relinquishing a baronet, who was dying for her, and sitting down contented as the wife of a country gentleman.

"Such was the tale with which I was fool enough to be gulled, and, by means of which, I suffered myself to be robbed and fleeced with impunity; but I was ultimately rescued from their clutches. Some affairs connected with Tyrrell came to my knowledge; I was shocked at the thought of forming a near connexion with such a man; but I was still more shocked at the callousness they displayed towards him, and especially his unhappy daughter, who, I knew, was treated by them with great harshness; but these feelings were increased tenfold when I discovered that Tyrrell's first errors had originated with Delaney, and that he had been most ungratefully and unmercifully treated by the latter.

"Some circumstances, which came to light through the medium of a servant whom she had offended, as to Julia's conduct during her residence in Dublin, completed the unfavourable bias which my mind had taken. I resolved I would not be a dupe to an unprincipled and artful woman—but I dissembled these feelings, and contrived to delay the marriage, which was fixed for the following week, by feigning indisposition.

"I am tiring you by this minute detail, but I will

abridge it, and tell you that I escaped the snare laid for me, at the expense of more than a year's produce of my income, and have ever since been the object of hatred and vengeance to the whole of the family of the Delaneys.

"In the course of this affair I became acquainted with the unhappy Elinor Tyrrell—her misfortunes, and her extraordinary beauty and accomplishments excited my warmest sympathy. I would have made any sacrifice to have rescued her from the misery she was in—but her father's bad conduct defeated every thing, and I was obliged to leave her to her fate—for she would not separate herself from him. I could not relate to you in twenty-four hours the schemes and artifices that he was continually practising upon my credulity, to draw money from me, which was immediately lavished away with the most reckless prodigality, until, at length, completely tired out, I gave up all connexion with him, and took every precaution that they should not find me out; but it seemed as if fate had determined to throw them in my way. In London, I again encountered them, and though I then relieved their necessities, I was again made the victim to a pretty considerable amount—the old man having contrived to raise money in my name, with which he decamped, leaving me to curse my own credulity and misplaced humanity, which made me continually his dupe.

"I then vowed, that, were it to save his life, I would never again stretch forth a hand to save him—but destiny was against me. I came here, and was immediately marked out as a prey by a set of sharpers, one of whom I had known as a visitor at Delaney's table, in his native country. A regular plan was laid for my ruin; and that

I was enabled to defeat it, was owing to the gratitude and vigilance of Elinor Tyrrell, who having overheard my name mentioned, set herself to work to trace out the designs of the confederates, and gave such undeniable proofs of their villany, as enabled me completely to defeat them, and placed them entirely at my mercy.

"I was not, you may depend upon it, ungrateful for this service;—and, though I could not rescue her from her degraded situation—though I knew it was hopeless to suppose that I could materially benefit her—I have always befriended her, and secretly contrived to ameliorate her wretched situation, without coming in contact with the wretch whom she has the misfortune to call her father.

"At the time of the affair which introduced me to you, I was, of course, compelled to secrete myself while you were in danger; and, as I knew no one whom I could depend upon so well as her, or who was so fertile in resources to avoid discovery, I flew to her, and communicated what had happened; but you may imagine my surprise when I discovered, from her despairing exclamations, that you were an object of peculiar interest to her. She acknowledged, in short, who you were, and thus excited in my bosom a still greater interest than your frankness and inexperience had previously kindled."

Denzil heard this detail with mingled feelings of surprise and mortification; but he hastened to undeceive St. George, as to the relationship between Tyrrell and his mother, observing that she was now totally released from all connexion with the latter.

"Hang the old rascal, then!" exclaimed the latter, "I would e'en let him take his chance, and not trouble

myself any more about him, were I in your place. He well deserves any punishment that can fall upon him, and it is scarcely doing your duty to society, to aid him to escape it!"

Denzil could not deny the truth of this observation, but he had pledged himself to assist the miserable wretch who was the subject of it, and who he still hoped would live to repent, and expiate the crimes he had been guilty of.

He was still meditating on this subject, when Ned announced that a man, who had something of importance to communicate, wished to see Mr. Montgomery; and on being desired to admit him, the Frenchman, from whose apartments Tyrrell had so recently made his escape, entered the room.

"Ah, monsieur!" he exclaimed, in a pathetic tone, and clasping his hands with an expression of the deepest sorrow. "It is all over! *Mon pauvre ami!* my good friend Tyrrell!——"

"Is he taken?" said Denzil, hastily.

"*Non, non*—but it is worse—much worse—an accident has arrived to him, and what is to become of me? *Miserable* that I am—it will be discovered that he was in my apartment, and I shall be ruined! My character will suffer! *Tout la monde* will accuse me of being his confederate, and——"

"How can that be, if he has not been discovered?" interrupted Denzil, with impatience; "why do you not at once explain——"

"That I sall do, if monsieur will have the goodness to listen to me," replied the man. "Well—monsieur will please to recollect that monsieur and *son tres*

humble serviteur—his most humble servant, was alarmed with a noise, and that——"

"Do, pray, tell me at once what has happened?" exclaimed Denzil, "is Tyrrell dead?"

"He is not dead," replied the man, "but, *Helas!* a short time will see him close his eyes for ever—and in my apartment, too!—He is dying, monsieur, dying!—and I dare not reveal what has——"

"You have not surely left him to perish without assistance?" said Denzil, shuddering.

"*Helas!* monsieur, it is too late—but he has implored for you to come to him, and——"

Denzil waited not for the request to be repeated, but, without a moment's hesitation, declared his readiness to go instantly.

"Ah, I am lost!—I am lost, if I return with you!" exclaimed the man, in an accent of despair; "the alarm will be given, and I shall not escape——"

"Remain here, then," replied Denzil, hastily; "the life of a fellow-creature must not be sacrificed, guilty as he is, to your fears for yourself;" and, without waiting for a reply, he hastened out of the house.

The necessity of having immediate medical assistance occurred to his mind, before he had proceeded many paces, and he therefore first bent his course to the surgeon's, under whose care his mother was residing.

Fortunately he was at home, and instantly ready to obey the call of one whose liberality he had experienced, and, without further delay, they proceeded to the house, which Denzil easily recognised.

Without hesitation or inquiry, Denzil ascended at once to the room, and, extended on a miserable pallet, beheld

the wretched Tyrrell, groaning in the agonies of death, but perfectly sensible of his wretched situation.

"Are you come to save me?" he exclaimed. "Oh, do not let me die!—I cannot die! I am not fit to die!"

Denzil tried to tranquillise him, and to learn from him what had happened.

"That wretch François," he exclaimed with difficulty, "but for him I might have been saved—but he left me, left me to perish!"

By degrees they learned that he had missed his footing, just as he gained the top of the ladder, which would have enabled him to escape over the roofs of the houses—that he had fallen with such violence in the secret recess through which Denzil had seen him escape, that he had been for a considerable time completely insensible to what had taken place—and that when he recovered his senses, and called upon François for help, the latter had left the apartment, to which he did not return during the whole night; and the wretched Tyrrell had been left inclosed in this small space for nearly twenty-four hours, suffering not only from the dreadful pain of the injuries he had received, but from the horrible belief that his colleague in crime had designedly left him there to perish.

"If there is a hell, I have tasted its torments this night!" exclaimed the wretched man; "not even a drop of water to moisten my lips! And my brain—my brain is on fire!"

Every assistance and comfort that humanity could devise, was quickly procured by Denzil's active exertions for the miserable sufferer; but it was all too late. The injuries he had received were not of themselves mortal; but his former intemperate life—the neglect of timely

assistance—and the violent irritation of his ungovernable temper—all contributed to make them so. At one moment he furiously rejected the assistance of the surgeon, and all around him, violently demanding "brandy!" to lull the excruciating pain of body and mind that he endured, and the next, he abjectly implored them to do any thing with him to save his life; to prolong it, if it were but for a month, a week, or a day; and then again he relapsed into raving and fury, because they would not give him that which he required.

One among the attendants, whom the assurance of the doctor that they would be well rewarded for their trouble had brought, suggested that a priest should be sent for, to administer the necessary offices of religion to the dying sinner; and Denzil, eager to catch at anything that might afford consolation, and tranquillise the mind of the sufferer, instantly acquiesced in the suggestion.

In a short time, a mild and respectable-looking man entered the apartment; and, after a few preparatory inquiries, intimated his wish to be left alone with the dying man. The latter, however, no sooner understood the purport of this visit, than he burst into a torrent of furious invective, which, united with his ghastly and terrific appearance, every feature being disfigured with the bruises he had received, and distorted with agony, created a sensation of horror in those who surrounded him.

"Do not come to torment me with your canting tales of heaven and hell!" he exclaimed. "What good can you do me, now? It is too late, if your creed is true! But I deny it——there is no such thing!—This world, these pains, are all I have to fear,—and you are

determined to make me suffer—you will not help me! What evidence is there against me! I did not murder *her—he* can tell you that she is alive; and, as to the other, it is all past and gone—you cannot prove it, I defy you to prove it! Why should I confess, then, that you may glory in adding to my torments?"

Denzil saw that his senses were fast failing; and the priest, retiring from the bed-side, exclaimed—

"Alas, this is a fearful sight! I fear my presence can do little good—but I will remain, and see whether he recovers his recollection."

From this moment, however, Tyrrell seemed to have lost all consciousness of the present, and to be incessantly occupied with harrowing recollections of the past; and Denzil shuddered as he heard him, in a tone that sunk lower and lower, until it became almost indistinct, utter at one moment the most blasphemous imprecations, and in the next, the most piteous supplications for mercy, until his strength totally failed under the conflict; and he lay, with no other symptom of life than the convulsive gasp, and wild catching with his hands, which denoted the struggle was nearly over.

"I can be of no farther service," he whispered to the surgeon, who remained with the priest, while the latter bent over the dying man, and held a small crucifix to his lips—"I can do no good by remaining, but you will let me know——"

The surgeon bowed his head in affirmation, and Denzil left the room; but as he closed the door, a shriek, the most dreadful that could be uttered by a human voice, arrested his attention,—he paused for a moment or two, and the doctor came out to him.

"It is all over!" he exclaimed, "and his guilty soul has fled, with——"

Denzil rushed away from him—he wished not to hear the conclusion of the sentence—he had already heard too much—and he shuddered with horror as he exclaimed—

"Such, then, is the end of one, who, with the possession of talents which might have rendered him happy, and benefited his fellow-creatures, was yet miserable himself, and the source of misery to others. But who shall set limits to the mercy of God? May his last sufferings—the misery which he himself acknowledged had been his constant attendant, even when his vices have triumphed outwardly, be his expiation, and plead for him at that great tribunal to which he has now gone!"

It has been remarked, that in no city in the world is so little regard paid to, or so little value set on human life, as in Paris. Circumstances attending the loss of it, which would in other places excite the greatest interest, be submitted to the strictest examination, and become the subject of universal sympathy, are there passed over as every-day occurrences; and, beyond the immediate circle of friends and relatives, are scarcely known.

Such was the case in the present instance of Tyrrell; and Denzil (who had anticipated, with no trifling uneasiness, the being called upon to account for circumstances, and compelled to make disclosures, which, though no other consequence could arise to him, would have the effect of making himself and his mother objects of public notoriety,) was surprised to find that no farther demands were made upon him, except a rather exorbitant demand on his purse, for the expenses of sepulture.

François, the colleague in iniquity of the wretched

Tyrrell, having received some trifling assistance from Denzil, quitted Paris, with the avowed determination of returning to the place of his birth, and reforming his evil courses; and Denzil was thus freed from his last source of uneasiness, on account of one with whom he wished all traces of his connexion to be buried in oblivion.

The intelligence of Tyrrell's death, which Denzil communicated to her who had so long regarded that unhappy man as her only parent, was a considerable shock; but the constant attention of her son, and the prospect of being freed from all care and anxiety for the future, by degrees restored her to tranquillity. Her health, too, rapidly amended, and Denzil began to feel the necessity of forming some decided plan for his future life.

To return to England, as soon as his mother was sufficiently re-established to travel, appeared the wisest course he could pursue. It was scarcely probable that Mr. Levison would remain long absent from his home, though he (Denzil) had many reasons to believe that that gentleman did not leave Paris with an intention of proceeding thither. At all events, Lord Alberton was in England, if Tyrrell's statement was at all to be depended upon; and that was sufficient to decide Denzil, that it was advisable to return thither.

He was revolving this subject in his mind, when Mr. St. George, who was now upon terms of great intimacy with him, entered the room.

"I have just seen a fresh importation from England," he observed; "and, if I mistake not, one in which you have some interest."

"Me!" replied Denzil, starting, the idea of Lord Alberton being fresh on his mind. "There are few," he continued, "I believe from thence, that could——"

"Has not Mr. Levison a son?" demanded St. George.

"No—he has a nephew; but what of him? It cannot surely be Charles!"

"That is the very person—Charles Levison, Esq. I read the name, in good legible characters, on his baggage, while the porters were contending for the honour of carrying it, though, for the size and weight of it, a sturdy Englishman might very well have dangled it on his finger and thumb to the Custom House, whither it is gone, with its owner."

"He is alone, then?" observed Denzil, taking up his hat, to go instantly in search of the friend and companion of his childhood.

St. George replied in the affirmative—"But had you not better remain here?" he continued; "for you may probably have some difficulty in meeting with him, while you may be assured he will soon find you out."

Denzil's impatience could scarcely yield to this suggestion—something of importance, he thought, must have occasioned Charles to have come over alone, and apparently without any intention of remaining, as he certainly would not have been without baggage and attendants, if that had been the case. His conjectures, however, were soon terminated by the entrance of Charles himself.

"So, here you are!" he exclaimed, with his usual *nonchalance*. "I have had a pretty hunt for you—but where is my uncle? I understand he is not with you, but, wherever he is, I must see him—for he and I must have a serious reckoning, I can tell him—I will no longer submit to be treated like a child!"

Mr. St. George quitted the room.

"Is that your friend Delaney, that you wrote so much about?" demanded Charles, looking after him, and seeming to forget, in a moment, his cause of irritation and complaint; "but I forgot," he continued, before Denzil could have time to utter a negative to his question; "I forgot you were parted—I saw something about your affair of honour in the newspapers; but they first said you were both killed, and then that only one, either you or he, I forget which—and then that you were only both wounded—and so I thought that, after all, perhaps it was not an affair of much consequence."

"It would not, perhaps, have been of much consequence, if the first report had been the true one," observed Denzil, smiling, "but we will pass to affairs that *are* of consequence. How is Mrs. Charles Levison? and how comes it that I see you here without her?"

"Oh, Emma—she was very well when I left her yesterday," he replied: "but she is gone down to Cumberland to see her mother, and so I have taken the opportunity for a trip, to find out what you are all doing here."

"And is your anxiety to see your old friends, your only motive for this journey?" demanded Denzil, who fancied he discovered, in Charles's usually placid countenance, traces of care and uneasiness, which were new to him.

"No, not exactly, I confess," he replied, "but the truth is, Denzil—and I will at once tell you the truth, because, I know, nobody will make more allowances for me, or sooner lend a hand to assist me, than yourself—the real fact is, that I have got myself into a confounded hobble in London, and I did not know what better to do,

than to run away from it altogether—and see whether I could prevail on my uncle to listen to reason, and help me out of it."

"Then you have got into debt, I suppose?" observed Denzil.

"Debt! yes, how could I help it, with such a miserly allowance as five hundred a year?—I could not bear to refuse Emma anything, and she, poor girl, thought her mother would not hold out long in her resentment—so we took a furnished house at five guineas a week, and then we could not do without a carriage and servants; and then, through a cousin of Emma, who lives in great style, we got introduced into very good company, and this brought on many expenses—but it is of no use my boring you to death with a long rigmarole—the long and the short of the matter is, that we have got into such embarrassments, that if I had not made the best of my way here, and sent Emma off to the country, I should have been in a prison, and she would have been without a house to put her head into; but, hang long faces!—it is of no use to fret for what can't be helped—my uncle must come down handsomely at once, and so I shall tell him—but I want you to break the matter to him first."

"I wish it were in my power to do so," replied Denzil, sighing, "but the fact is, Charles, I am unhappily in disgrace with your uncle myself; he has quitted Paris, in resentment of my supposed offence—*supposed*, I say, because I am really unconscious of having done anything that ought to offend him."

"He is an old——but you know where he is, do you not?" demanded Charles, suppressing the epithet he was about to utter.

Denzil replied in the negative, but it was with difficulty he could convince Charles; the latter conceiving that he merely said so, to hinder him from prematurely seeing his uncle.

"Why the deuce then don't you speak out at once, Denzil," he observed, "and tell me what it was that drove him off? You cannot, of course, have offended him with regard to Fanny, since every one must be convinced that he would not have brought her over here, if he had not totally withdrawn his opposition to the match between you. Indeed, I fully expected to have found you married by this time."

"And do you not know——have you never suspected," said Denzil, in a faltering voice, "that there exists an impediment to the union you speak of, which not even Mr. Levison could remove? Did you not know," he continued, "that I quitted England under that conviction?"

Charles stared.

"I am totally at a loss for your meaning," he replied. "Certainly, I knew you quitted England in despair, and a very foolish thing it was of you to do so, and so I know Fanny thought, as well as I; but that you had any other reason to despair, than the improbability of my uncle's consenting to the match, never entered either of our heads, I am sure. But I wish to goodness you would speak out at once, and let me understand what you are aiming at——it would save us both a great deal of trouble, I am inclined to think."

"And I am inclined to think so too, Charles; and I wish to heaven I had done so long ago, for I suspect I have been making myself very wretched for the last nine

months. But I will not keep you in suspense any longer, but relate to you all that—Let me, however, first ask you whether you are acquainted with the melancholy circumstances which accompanied my birth?"

"I am," replied Charles, "for I learned them, under a strict promise of secrecy, from my aunt Rachel. After your departure, she was anxious to convince me that my uncle was not so censurable for harshness and inconsistency as I considered him to be, and she related to me the story, which I had heard imperfectly before, though without having any idea of its relation to you."

"You know, then, that there were two children——that I had a sister, born at the same time."

"Yes, and who died at Lausanne, soon after your arrival from England," observed Charles.

"Are you sure of that?" exclaimed Denzil. "Oh, Charles, were I but certain of that, it would at once remove——"

"Sure of it, why should my aunt assert such a thing if it was not truth; besides, I myself recollected the circumstance, child as I was at the time, that we had another play-fellow, a little girl who was called Elinor. She was buried in the same grave with Fanny's mother, who was a native of France, and died a few hours after Mr. Levison's departure to England.

"He had come, as aunt Rachel said, too late to render her that justice which she deserved; for she was an innocent and amiable girl, who had been thrown on his protection by some singular circumstances, and severely has he since condemned himself for the advantage he took of her love for him, and her destitute situation. It was there he was residing with her, when he received the information of his brother's death. She was on the point of

making him a father, but he left her to come to England, and she died in giving birth to a daughter. Fanny was nursed at Lausanne, and, much as my uncle lamented her mother, I believe he had no intention of publicly acknowledging her as his daughter. But some circumstances induced him to return to Lausanne, and you, your sister, and myself, were the companions of his journey. I fancy his original intention was to have left us there for a few years, under the care of the lady who had charge of Fanny, but it seems he had become so habituated to the society of his little family, as he called us, and, after the death of Elinor, so devotedly attached to his little girl, who it appears was the living miniature of her mother, that he determined on remaining there, and there he was afterwards joined by my aunt; a circumstance which you must well recollect, as also the death and burial of our good nurse Erckhardt. And now, in return for my long story," he continued, "I trust you will explain all the mighty mystery which you have been brooding over so long, and which, from your looks, I consider I have cleared up to your satisfaction."

Denzil no longer hesitated to acknowledge the secret cause of his unhappiness. Every doubt, every fear was removed from his mind, and he proceeded to rehearse all that had occurred preceding his departure from England; the terror and remorse that had been created in his mind by the solemn and mysterious warning of his mother; and the conversation with Mr. Levison, which he had construed into a confirmation of the averment of the former, and which had rendered him anxious to quit a place which he could no longer remain in, without feeling that every moment added to his guilt.

"And all this comes of romance and romantic feelings?"

observed Charles. "Now such a plain-dealing simpleton as myself would have none of this scrupulous delicacy to hinder my speaking outright, and saying, 'Are these things so or not?' and thus at once putting an end to the subject. Poor Fanny! well might she be puzzled, mortified, and harassed by your strange conduct, which, I am sure, has been as inexplicable to her as to me; and I suppose it has been some vagary of this kind, that has given her and her father offence now, and driven them off to look for another husband for her—for I am sure you deserve it, for your stupidity. But pray--you spoke of your mother and Tyrrell, as if you had had some recent communication with them. Has it been that, which has given offence to my uncle? because——"

"I have another long tale to relate on that subject," replied Denzil, with some embarrassment; "but as it is getting late, and I think you must stand in need of repose, we will defer it till to-morrow morning, and then, perhaps, I shall surprise you still more than I have done."

CHAPTER XX.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame!—Burns.

Having seen his friend safe at rest for the night, Denzil, impatient to communicate to his mother the important intelligence he had received, hastened to her apartments.

"It would be folly to suppose that she can very

deeply regret the death of a child whom she scarcely knew," he observed to himself; "and I can, therefore, have no hesitation in telling her the whole truth—a truth which has made me the happiest being—and yet my happiness is far from confirmed," he exclaimed, as Charles's ill-omened surmise recurred to his mind. "She is, perhaps, by this time, far distant from me—her father offended—and she herself—how can she think otherwise of me than as a wayward, ungrateful——Oh, should she indeed learn to despise me, and should some other, whom her father may approve, aspire to take my place in her affections—Oh, no! it cannot—will not be, that I should be destined to have my happiness thus within my very grasp—only to behold it snatched away for ever!"

Lost in these conflicting emotions, Denzil did not observe that he had taken a wrong turning, and that instead of being in the direct road to his mother's apartments, he had taken one which led to the quay, near the foot of the magnificent Pont Neuf. He was about to turn and retrace his steps, when they were suddenly arrested by the sound of a well-known voice, speaking in a tone of great irritation. It was Julia Delaney! and surprise at her being in Paris, when he had supposed her far off, rather than any interest, kept him for a moment stationary, and he heard her say——

"Then you acknowledge yourself a villain, and that you have neither home, nor fortune, nor——and what, then, have you brought me here to starve?"

"I have told you the truth, my dear," replied the man to whom she was speaking; "but I know not how you can have the face to reproach me, when you know your own and your father's representations were quite as

false as mine. Where is the fortune he was to give you? Where are his grand estates, and——but come, Julia, let us make the best of a bad bargain—we are two poor devils together, that is certain, and we must set both our wits to work."

Julia burst into a torrent of invectives, and Denzil, alike pained and disgusted, hastily proceeded on his way; but he had got but a few paces, when he heard a piercing shriek—it was repeated, and he flew back to the spot where he had left them standing. No one was there, but he heard the noise of some one struggling in the water, and the next moment beheld the white dress of Julia, which had buoyed her up to the surface, at some distance from the bank.

Without a moment's hesitation he tore off his coat, and jumped in. She had sunk the second time, but again she arose, and he caught hold of her.

Several people had now arrived, drawn thither by the shriek she had uttered, and with their aid she was conveyed to the shore.

Life was nearly extinct, but the prompt assistance she received at the house to which she was taken, at length restored her to sense and recollection; and Denzil, having left directions that every accommodation should be afforded her, returned home to change his clothes.

Gratified as he felt that he had been enabled to prevent a fellow creature from thus prematurely rushing into eternity, he still experienced considerable anxiety at the prospect of being probably compelled into further intercourse with Julia Delaney, of whom he entertained such an unfavourable opinion.

It was true that, at present, she was unconscious who

had been her preserver, and he was under no obligation to visit her again; but he could not but feel compassion for her deserted situation, and he thought that it would be cruelty to have recalled her to existence, without affording her some further assistance to support it.

It was now too late to visit his mother, and the earnest entreaties of those around prevailed upon him to retire at once to bed, to prevent his suffering from having remained so long in his wet clothes.

The mischief, however, was already done.—In a few hours, Denzil was awakened by a violent shivering fit, and, before morning, he was seriously ill.

Charles's vexation and disappointment were excessive, and he vented them in loud terms when he visited his suffering friend.

"I do not think there ever was such an unlucky dog as I am," he observed. "There have I been lying awake half the night, anticipating the pleasures I should enjoy with you in this gay place, and now I shall be just like a fish out of water—for you know my French extends a very little way, and I have been obliged already to call in Ned as my interpreter."

Denzil, in spite of headache and all the *et ceteras* of a violent cold, laughed heartily at the idea of Ned's knowledge of the French language.

"Well," observed Charles, "but you have not yet told me who this female was, for whom you risked your life, and how you happened to be upon the spot, at that time of night?"

Denzil hesitated whether he should disclose the name of her whom he had been the means of rescuing from death; but he could not see that any evil could result

from so doing, and he considered, that, should his own indisposition prove serious, which, from his present feelings, he anticipated would be the case, it would be advisable to employ Charles to make some arrangements permanently to benefit the unhappy Julia.

Charles listened to his explanation with surprise.

"Well, but what can you do for her?" he observed. "It cannot be expected that you are going to burthen yourself with the support of a foolish extravagant woman, and such she appears to be, merely because she has suffered herself to be taken in by some sharper, and in her disappointment madly resolved upon suicide? I think you have already done more than she could have expected you to do, in risking your life to save hers!"

"I did no more for her, than I should have done for any one under such circumstances," replied Denzil; "nor do I now feel more interest for her than I should feel for any other female, in the same unhappy situation; but I cannot reconcile it to my feelings, to rest contented with what I have done, without——"

"Well, well, I am sure I don't want to intercept your benevolence towards her," interrupted Charles. "I dare say I should feel as you do, if I had been the means of rescuing a pretty woman from death, and saw her thrown upon me entirely for support. So, only say what you wish me to do, and I am at your service."

Denzil looked gravely at Charles, for there was an air of levity in his manner, even more than in his speech, that was totally irreconcilable, he thought, with good feeling. But, though Charles was never distinguished for excessive sensibility, Denzil was unwilling to believe him capable of any thing worse than levity, and he therefore proceeded to direct him to inquire respecting

the health of the unhappy Julia; and, if she were sufficiently recovered to see him, to make known to her who he was, and offer in his (Denzil's) name, to assist her in any manner she might be able to suggest.

Charles departed, glad, as he observed, to have something to do—and Denzil, who had slept but little during the night, soon dropped into a slumber, from which he was, however, in a short time awakened by the sound of Ned's voice, expostulating with some one at the chamber door, on the impolicy and impropriety of disturbing a sick man.

"Do not talk to me!" replied the person addressed, "I must and will see him!"—and, in another moment, Julia Delaney rushed into the room, and threw herself on her knees by the bed-side.

"Oh, Denzil, dear Denzil," she exclaimed; "is it for me—for the unworthy Julia, you are suffering! For me, that you have risked your invaluable life! Oh, Denzil, never shall I know a moment's happiness, until I see you restored to health! Twice has the wretched Julia been the means of endangering your life, and yet I would have died for you—have died with pleasure, had I but thought you would have lamented my fate!"

She hid her face in the bed-clothes, and sobbed aloud, while Denzil, pained, embarrassed, and unable to frame a reply to this violent and overstrained effusion, reproachfully observed to Charles, who had followed her into the room——

"How could you be so thoughtless, Charles, as to suffer Miss Delaney to come out—or so foolish as to exaggerate the slight indisposition which I am suffering, into a serious illness?"

"Nay," returned Charles, smiling significantly, "you

must not blame me, Denzil, if the lady's violent feelings on your account, have overcome all motives of prudence on her part. I assure you, I tried my utmost eloquence to induce her to remain at home—for at least a day or two; but death itself, she said, was preferable to being longer detained from her preserver."

"I should hope," observed Denzil, coldly, "the recent escape, Miss Delaney——"

"Oh, call me not by that formal name, dearest Denzil!" she exclaimed; "call me Julia—your own Julia—and yet, wretch! miserable wretch that I am! I had forgotten that I can no longer be yours—the fatal deed is done! Oh, Denzil, I am ruined—ruined for ever! In a fit of despair, at the unhappy events which separated me from you, I listened to the proposals of one whom my father favoured, and became his wife! But, though I had given my hand, I could not bestow my heart! He became offended at my coldness, and having, by some means, discovered the cause of it, treated me with severity and harshness. Yesterday, only, we arrived in Paris, on our way to England; but, alas, Denzil, the thought that I was in the same city in which I had enjoyed such superlative happiness with you—the thought that you were, perhaps, still here—though I did not dare make the inquiry, or even utter your name, totally overcame my reason, and, in a fit of despair, I attempted——"

"Julia——Miss Delaney!" interrupted Denzil, who had remained hitherto silent, in utter surprise at the exaggerated tissue of falsehoods to which she had given utterance——"Pardon me, madam," he continued, "I know not the appellation by which I ought properly to

address you—but let me at once put an end to this *scene*, by informing you that I am, from the testimony of my own ears, fully acquainted with the causes that led to the rash action, which, I am sorry to see, has made so little impression on you. I was, by accident, within hearing of the conclusion of your conversation with your husband, and learned quite sufficient to explain, though not to excuse, the measure by which you attempted to terminate your mortification and disappointment. I am sorry for you—very sorry for you," he continued, in a tone of pity, "but I wish at once to put an end to all attempts to identify me with those violent feelings, of which I *do* know the real foundation."

Confounded and abashed beyond concealment, Julia arose from her recumbent posture——"You know, then, Mr. Montgomery," she observed, in a calmer tone, "that I have married a wretch—a villain—a vile impostor, who has brought me here! But you do not know, you will not know, that it was utter despair of ever beholding you,—you, whom I solemnly declare to be the only man I ever loved——"

"Or pretended to love," said Mr. St. George, who had, unperceived, entered the room, and had glided round to the opposite side of the bed, so as to confront her face to face.

Julia remained for a moment motionless and silent, and at length burst into an hysterical fit of tears.

"This will not do for me, Miss Delaney," said St. George, in a cool, sarcastic tone; "I have had too much experience of these sort of affairs, to be imposed upon by the crocodile tears of an artful, unprincipled woman; and I am desirous that my friend here should see you in

your true colours—It may be useful to him, in the journey through life, which he is but just commencing; and therefore I again ask you, is Mr. Denzil Montgomery the first, second, third, fourth—shall I go on, or will you spare me the trouble, by confessing at once that the tale of love, which you tell so prettily, has been as often, nay oftener, repeated than your paternoster?"

"You are an inhuman wretch!" exclaimed Julia, her eyes darting fire; "but I shall find a time to be revenged upon you, depend upon it. As to your friend here, whom you seem to have taken under your protection, I owe him some gratitude, and will therefore at once tell him that he had better have surrendered his senses to my keeping than to yours. I might have spent his money, but I should not have done what you will do—harden his heart, and corrupt his principles."

"And who, then, made me what I am?" observed St. George, significantly. "What was I, when I first knew you, Julia Delaney?—and what have you and your family made me? And yet I ought not to reproach *you*, poor, wretched girl! Nurtured in crime, and tutored in duplicity, what could be expected from the pupil of such a school as Delaney's? You acted only up to the doctrines you had been taught, while I——but we will end this recrimination. Mr. Montgomery must be convinced, at least, of the sincerity of my good wishes towards him, by my making him a witness of this scene. He knows both you and me, Julia, now—and it will be his own fault, if he suffers either of us to lead him from the path he has hitherto persevered in. But, now, to descend from our stilts to a little plain matter-of-fact—What do you mean to do with yourself, Julia? You are now, I suppose,

quite at liberty—for your *caro sposo* will not, I imagine——"

"Do not mention the wretch!" exclaimed Julia, with a look of disgust, "and to think, too, that I am really married to him!"

"'That is the unkindest cut of all!'" replied St. George; "but what would you say, my pretty Julia, if I were to put you in a way to prove that he has been married half-a-dozen times before; and that therefore the tie between you is null and void?"

"I would say that I would forgive you all you have ever done to vex and mortify me!" she returned. "If you would only enable me to send the villain to the galleys, and free myself for ever from him!"

"I cannot promise that, lovely Julia," said St. George; "because I suspect that he has taken care to avoid the possibility of such a thing, by making his retreat; but come, I have a great deal to tell you, and perhaps some things that may restore the smile to that pretty face—but it is as well that we should leave Mr. Montgomery to his repose, and not annoy him any longer with our lover's quarrels."

"Lovers!" repeated Julia, pouting; but in a tone that evidently shewed a wish for conciliation.

Mr. St. George nodded a farewell to Denzil, and drawing Julia's arm through his, they quitted the room together, leaving Denzil to reflect with surprise on the strange mixture of duplicity and sincere feeling, sound sense and hypocrisy, liberality and selfishness, which he had just witnessed.

CHAPTER XXI.

> The noblest minds their virtue prove,
> By pity, sympathy, and love;
> These, these, are feelings truly fine,
> And prove their owner half divine.—COWPER.

THE effects of Denzil's exertions, in behalf of his quondam friend Miss Delaney, or, as she was now called, Mrs. Wilmington, proved less serious than he had at first apprehended; and, after a day's confinement to his room, he was enabled to renew his former occupations, with no other disagreeable result than a slight degree of lassitude.

The arrival of Charles, which he had sent his servant Ned to communicate to his mother, afforded Denzil a sufficient plea for his absence from her, without exposing the danger he had run, or the renewal, in some measure, of an intercourse between him and a member of the family of Delaney, whose name was never heard by her without exciting the bitterest feelings.

Totally absorbed in the novelty of his new abode, Charles Levison had evinced no desire of recurring to the circumstances which Denzil had promised to explain to him; and the latter feeling no disposition, in his present mood, to return to the subject, avoided all allusion to it, and yielded readily to the proposal, that he should accompany Charles in a visit to the wonders of the Palais Royale, of which he said he had taken a cursory view the day before, but which he now longed to revisit with one

who was more *au fait* than Ned, who had been his guide on the former occasion.

Perfectly restored to all his usual careless and thoughtless tone, Charles lounged along, holding Denzil by the arm, pausing and wondering whenever anything new or surprising caught his sight, and occasionally reproaching his companion for not feeling so much pleasure and satisfaction as he did.

In this manner they had made several turns, and Denzil, heartily tired, and desirous of slipping away to pay his intended visit to his mother, was on the point of proposing to return, when Charles suddenly darted from him, and, with a hearty slap on the shoulder, and an exclamation of delight and surprise, accosted a person who was walking on before them.

"Charles, my dear boy, my *royal Charlie!*" exclaimed the person whom he addressed, a dashing, fashionable-looking man, "what good wind has blown you over here, to this region of delight and beauty? Where is Mrs. Levison? She is well, I hope? Where is she?—come, you must take me to pay my *devoirs*, and make the *amende honorable*, for having run away without honouring her last card of invitation; but, you know, I am a sad harum-scarum fellow,—here to-day, and gone to-morrow, though I really had begun, before I had been here twenty-four hours, to think very gravely of what the divine Mrs. Levison would say at my unseasonable desertion, and positively I do think, if I had not met you, I should have been off back again before I slept, if it had been only to apologise, and *pour prendre congée* in due form."

"It would have been of no use, then," said Charles, whose countenance had gradually changed during this

flippant speech, from the expression of self-gratulation at meeting this dear friend, to the extreme of discontent and vexation, apparently at the recollections which his presence occasioned. "It would have been of no use, then," he repeated, in a sulky tone, "for Emma never gave the party you speak of, and she has been down in Cumberland, with her mother, these ten days past."

"Oh, Diavolo!" exclaimed the friend, "the beautiful Emma buried alive in the wilds of Cumberland!—the goddess of fashion converted into a rural deity!

"'Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud,
Without our special wonder?'

"But, I forgot, I must not quote Shakspeare here, or I shall be looked upon as a barbarian."

"Not quote Shakspeare?" returned Charles, immediately forgetting the subject which had the moment before so strongly excited his feelings of displeasure and regret.

"No, my dear fellow, the *haut-ton* and *gens d'esprit* of Paris vote him a *bore?* But where are you? and why do you not introduce me to your solemn friend, there? What is he?—he looks too young to be qualified to educate grown gentlemen, or I should take him for a tutor that papa Levison had appointed to protect you from the seductions and dangers of this fair city of Paris."

The last sentence was uttered in a low tone, but sufficiently audible to reach Denzil's ears, who, before not greatly prepossessed in favour of Charles's friend, was now still less inclined to profit by the introduction which took place between them, and from which he learned that the stranger was the honourable Captain Templeton.

"Son of the earl of Singlemore," whispered Charles,

in addition, as if desirous of impressing Denzil with extraordinary respect for his dear and intimate friend—for such, by the very easy tone which Captain Templeton assumed in speaking of the domestic affairs of Charles, and his absent connexions, the latter appeared to be.

"He owes me fifty pounds!" said Charles, looking after him, when they parted, "besides having drawn me in to back his bill to his tailor, for I know not how much—and yet now he talks only of having acted shabbily, in not taking leave, as if it was not much more shabby to run away without fulfilling his promise to pay me, on the very day he set off. As to Emma, I am sure he made himself very ridiculous, and her very angry, with his pretended adoration—and I often used to suspect that, after all, he was only making a fool of her, and of me too!"

"And yet you greet this man as your dear friend, and seem delighted that he should be here?" said Denzil, with angry surprise.

"One is so glad to see anybody one knows in a strange place;" replied Charles, looking very foolish; "however, I shall certainly ask him for the money I lent him, when I see him again."

A few more questions from Denzil elicited the fact that Charles had been completely the dupe of his honourable associates; and that, after having lost to them heavy sums at play, he had engaged himself to an amount which would seriously embarrass him, even should he succeed in prevailing upon Mr. Levison to increase his allowance.

Denzil heard this account with feelings of extreme vexation. His own resources were nearly drained, by the extraordinary demands that had been lately made on

them; and the task of providing suitably for his mother would, he felt, be quite as much as he could easily undertake, for some time to come; yet it was very plain that Charles placed great reliance on his assistance, and, in fact, he frankly acknowledged that he had left home so unprovided, that he must be under the necessity of depending on the bounty of his friend, until he heard from his uncle.

All these vexatious considerations, however, were but as a trifle on the mind of Denzil, in comparison with the heartfelt satisfaction he received from the assurance of Charles, that he had all along erred in supposing Fanny Levison to be his (Denzil's) sister; and, full of this theme, he repaired to the apartments of his mother, determined to communicate to her all he had learned.

She heard him with interest and attention; but it was plain that his arguments were by no means so conclusive to her as he had expected.

"I was aware that Mr. Levison had a daughter," she observed; "but my heart, my eyes, could not deceive me —Oh no, it was my Elinor whom I beheld! The voice of nature always speaks unerringly—I should have recognised my own child anywhere; and, sure I am, that that beautiful creature, whom I have beheld probably for the last time, was my own—my darling Elinor! It must have been the child of Charles Levison, who was buried at Lausanne—a thousand circumstances confirm it to my mind and memory!"

Again Denzil felt the pangs of doubt, of fear, and of suspense, crowd upon him, and banish at once the calm which the communication of Charles had created in his mind.

There was but one way of ascertaining the truth, and but one way of putting an end to all uncertainty—it was, to appeal to Mr. Levison, without any reserve. But where was Mr. Levison? Denzil's every nerve throbbed with agony as he reflected that weeks, nay months, might pass over, before he could ascertain whither Mr. Levison had gone. All other objects, compared with that, now seemed trifling; and he was just about to declare his resolution of following his former friend and benefactor, even if it were to the farthermost ends of the earth, could he once discover the route he had taken, when his thoughts on that head were all put to flight by an observation of his mother's, relative to their intended journey to England.

"We ought not to delay it, my dear boy," she observed; "for my life is but precarious, and it would be at least one flower to strew my path to the grave, should I see you acknowledged to be——"

"I will not delay it, my dear mother," returned Denzil, starting from his reverie; "it is, it ought to be, for your sake, the first object of my thoughts; but at this moment it is impossible—this heedless, thoughtless Charles is involved in trouble, and he has no friend here but me. Should I desert him——"

"Oh, no, no—my dear son, never let it be said that we should give another pang to the heart of any member of the Levison family—No, rather would I renounce every hope that I have ventured to form, than that you should fail in your duty to the nephew of your benefactor and mine!"

With a heart divided between a thousand hopes and fears, Denzil returned to his hotel, where, however, he

found to his surprise, and somewhat to his displeasure, that Charles was absent.

He had strolled out, the servants said, leaving word that he should return in a quarter of an hour; but three hours passed away, and he came not.

"The foolish fellow has bewildered himself," thought Denzil, "and his slight acquaintance with the French language will not allow him to understand, or make himself understood by those who would guide him hither."

Considering, however, that, though he might suffer some trifling inconvenience, he would eventually find his way to the hotel, Denzil contented himself with sending two of the servants in search of him; but when the hour of midnight arrived, without bringing any intelligence of him, he became alarmed, and was on the point of sallying out himself, when he heard his voice, in a loud key, upon the stairs.

Denzil darted forwards to meet him, conceiving that something unpleasant had occurred; but the first glance explained that Charles had been making himself what he called *comfortable*, or, in other words, he was in a state of the most uproarious felicity.

"Where in the world have you been?" demanded Denzil, scarcely able to forbear laughing at the half-crying, half-important look which Charles assumed.

"I have been in very good company, I assure you," replied the latter, nodding his head significantly; "very good company, indeed—and we have been drinking your health in a bumper, and it has made me a little—a little giddy!" and he reeled into a chair.

By degrees Denzil drew from him that he had met St. George, who had rescued him from the jeopardy which

the former had suspected he had got into, namely, the inability to make himself understood, when he would have inquired his way back to the hotel.

"He gave me some excellent wine!" he continued; "and, by Jove, that Julia is a famous nice girl! Talk of Fanny Levison, or my Emma—she's ten times handsomer than either, and sings divinely; and besides, somehow, I always feel more at ease, when a woman don't make any great pretensions to modesty, and all that stuff! I don't like a downright coarse, impudent woman—but Julia is just what I *do* like—so free and easy, and so full of chat and spirits—it is impossible to be dull in her company! Upon my honour, Denzil, you are a lucky fellow to have had the chance of securing her gratitude by saving her life—but, it seems, you do not set any value upon what you have done, and would just as soon have had the satisfaction of rescuing the ugliest girl in Paris—though, I'm sure, half the young fellows, either here or in London, would give a hundred pounds to have have had your chance!"

"You seem to have profited by the free and easy morals, as well as manners, of the company you have been with," observed Denzil, gravely; "but, surely, I do not rightly comprehend you? You cannot mean to say that Julia Delaney was with St. George!"

"I do mean to say that she is his—his—what did he call her?—*Dame de Maison!* That is to say, she does him the honour to sit at his table, and carve the chickens; and, upon my word, his supper-table was infinitely more attractive than your cold, cheerless, bachelor-looking tray with sandwiches. I don't think I shall patronise you at all, unless you get a lady to preside; though, by-the-by,

Julia hinted a good deal that there is a lady who—eh! don't blush, Denzil, at being found out! Only, as she says, it is so selfish, so suspicious, so Englishmanlike, to be keeping a fine woman mewed up in a dull, solitary lodging in the suburbs, and creeping to see her in the dusk of the evening, instead of letting her shine out in her proper place, and——"

"It is false, Mr. Levison!" interrupted Denzil, with warmth; "though, even if it were true, it would argue some remains of virtue in me, that I did not openly sin."

"Virtue!" repeated Charles, with a laugh of derision. "Pshaw, my dear fellow, we are in Paris, and not in Cumberland now; and who ever hears or thinks, much less talks, about virtue and morality, or any such old-fashioned stuff here!"

"I am sorry for it," returned Denzil, "and still more sorry to hear such language from your lips. The excellent man——"

"'Where my Julia's lips do smile,
There's the land of Cherry Isle,'"

sang Charles, drowning the conclusion of Denzil's speech.

"You had better go to bed, Charles," observed Denzil; "you are not in a fit state for conversation. In the morning——"

"Aye, in the morning, you will preach me one of your musty old sermons, upon the moral duties? Is not that what you mean to say, Denzil? But it won't do, my boy—I have seen too much of life! and, besides, I shall have the head-ache; and, besides, I have promised to drive Julia out in St. George's britschka; and besides——I must go to bed, positively, for you have upset all my bright ideas, and, with your solemn looks, have turned all the

wine I have drunk sour. So, good night, Mr. Morality! Good night, my virtuous Denzil! Remember me to your prudent, pious, discreet, female friend in the Rue—Rue—Fauxbourg—what is it? I declare it is all gone out of my head, though Julia told me the exact spot."

"That female will remember you, Mr. Levison, in her prayers to-night," said Denzil, in a voice faltering with emotion; "that female will pray for your happiness, as the nephew, the adopted son of her benefactor—of the preserver of her children! That female, sir, is my mother—and now, sport no more with her name and my feelings!"

"Good heavens, Denzil, do not look so fearfully upon me!" stammered Charles, dismissing in a moment the tone of levity which he had before assumed. "Shake hands with me, and say you forgive me—I am sure, you know I would not say or do any thing to hurt you, for the world! And Julia, I am certain, has too much regard, too much respect for you——"

"Do not mention her name to me!" returned Montgomery. "I want neither regard nor respect from her! I want only, if she has one spark of that gratitude she feigned to feel so largely, that she will refrain from speaking of me, or aught connected with me."

"Well, but I will tell you a little bit of a secret, Denzil, about this affair," observed Charles, "if you will have patience to listen to me;—and that is, that I do believe that it was Julia who instigated my uncle and Fanny to drive away from Paris, aye, and that she knows, too, where they are gone! She is an artful little baggage, that I am sure of—and she told me a long story about her being desperately in love with you, and

her watching you, and finding out that you had an amour, as she thought, and then her jealousy, or her wish to save you from ruin——Oh, yes, I could read very well she was the mischief-maker, and, no doubt, poor Fanny has gone away, breaking her heart with the thought that you were a vile hypocrite, pretending to make love to her, and all the while——yes, yes, that was the cause of their flying off in a tangent, you may depend on it! But I'll have it all out of the little gipsy, to-morrow, when I drive her out! Upon my word, she is really a bewitching creature, Denzil! what a sensation it would make in London, if I were to carry her off, and bring her out next season—I know she would eclipse all——"

"I cannot listen to you with patience, Charles!" exclaimed Denzil, "for heaven's sake, for your own sake, talk not as if your heart were utterly dead to those excellent lessons which——"

"Pshaw! or rather, bah! as Julia says, in such a pretty Frenchified tone——

> 'Preach not to me your musty rules,
> Ye drones, who mould in idle cell—
> The heart is wiser than the schools,
> The senses always reason well.'

"There, you droll dog, there is Milton's authority for my doctrines; and so now remain quiet, and let me not hear another word of stale morality. Bacchus and Venus are my deities!

> 'Come, jolly Bacchus, god of wine,
> Crown our nights with pleasure!'"

And he reeled out of the room, shouting, in the most

discordant tones, the song he had chosen as illustrative of his sentiments.

"Pleasure, indeed!" repeated Denzil, sighing; "such pleasures as yours, I fear, will prove but short-lived, and leave behind traces of a far different feeling. Yet I will hope that these are but the ebullitions of a fancy heated by wine; and, at all events, I will take care, as far as it is in my power, to counteract the evil impressions which the society he has unfortunately fallen into may create. Would that his excellent uncle—that Fanny—were here! Their presence might, perhaps, restrain him, and give a different tone to——" Fanny! —— how many thoughts, how many fond imaginings, how many ardent wishes and deep sighs of regret were conjured up to his mind in an instant, at the bare mention of her name. And did she still feel for him?—was he still the object of her affections, as he felt he had been, when he dared not be grateful—when he dared not wish to be so—when he had prayed that she might forget him, as he had vainly tried to forget her? Oh, what were the agonies of those hours, which he even now shuddered to recal to his mind—those agonies of guilty, despairing, yet uncontrollable and intense passion for one whom he believed it a crime even to think of, except with the pure and holy feeling of a brother's love! And how was he sure—was it beyond a doubt—that that obstacle to the indulgence of his passion was removed?—was he sure that she, for whose presence he now sighed with such intensity, was, indeed, free to receive his vows? —The thought was startling—he dared not trust himself to reflect upon it—yet still it pursued him, and, even in sleep, visions of horror, in which the fair form of her he loved was ever foremost, now frowning upon him in

anger, and then seeming to reproach him with tears, as the cause of all her sorrows—haunted his pillow, and at length effectually banished that repose which he anxiously sought from his oppressive thoughts.

Denzil considered not that this was but the natural consequence of the uneasiness and perplexity, which Charles's thoughtlessness and baneful propensities had excited in his mind, added to the check which his confidence had received, from the pertinacious adherence of his mother to her first conceptions respecting Fanny; but with that melancholy which his dubious situation and the circumstances connected with his birth had created, he gave way to the most gloomy forebodings as to the future, and the most distressing reminiscences of the past.

Morning came, and Charles, languid, dejected, and spiritless, excited the deepest pity and commiseration in Denzil's bosom, who, unused to see the effects of intoxication, attributed to sorrow and shame, that which was only the natural consequences attendant on the excess of which Charles had been guilty.

"He has seen his error already," mentally observed the kind-hearted Denzil, "and it would be cruel in me to exaggerate those feelings, which, I trust, will henceforth influence his conduct."

The breakfast hour passed off with scarcely any attempt on the part of Charles to keep up a conversation which Denzil, though himself depressed, endeavoured to render interesting to his companion, by leading it to subjects, which, had the latter been in his usual spirits, would have possessed to him the greatest charms; but it was in vain that Denzil expatiated on the splendour and variety of entertainments which might be enjoyed in Paris,

sans peur et sans reproche; in vain that he tried to excite a laugh, by detailing numerous traits of the frivolity and inconsistency—the extremes of pride and abject littleness—which had fallen under his observation; the ridiculous assumptions of superiority and freedom from prejudice, contrasted with the most glaring proofs of bigotry and ignorance;—all, in short, that must occur to a soberminded and reflective individual, during a residence in "*la grande ville de la grande nation*"—all was alike stale, flat, and unprofitable to him to whom these remarks were addressed, and Denzil, at length convinced that all attempts to amuse him were at present fruitless—and half inclined to think that it would perhaps be the wisest plan to leave him to the natural issue of his own reflections, rather than endeavour to direct their course, quitted the room, pleading an engagement which would occupy him for an hour or two.

"After which," he continued, "my time will be at your service; and I will be your guide to the lions, if you please to accept my services. It is my mother to whom I am going, for the time I mentioned," he added, casting down his eyes, while a slight blush crossed his cheek at the recollection of what had passed on the preceding night, "and remember, Charles, it is in confidence to you that I mention that unfortunate woman. To Miss Delaney, or Mrs. —— I forget by what title she is now called—but to her, I trust, should you be so unfortunate as again to fall in her way, you will be silent, as to the nature of my visits to——"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Charles, in a tone which indicated his wish not to enter upon the subject; "I will certainly be cautious on that head. You need fear

nothing from me, Denzil—for you know, though I am sometimes thoughtless, I would not seriously do anything to injure you; and you are, of course, placed in a very awkward situation with regard to the person you mention; though I declare, if you had not again mentioned it, it had quite clean gone out of my head; I had quite forgot your telling me last night, who it was that you went to see in——I forget the name of the street—but it is no matter—I do not wish to know more on the subject; and, indeed, it would not be proper, all things considered, that I should know anything about such a person; and I am sorry, now I come to think of it, that my foolish remarks, last night, should have drawn the secret from you—because, if my uncle were to come to know——"

"If your uncle were here now, Charles," interrupted Denzil, trembling with emotion, "he would be the first to whom I would communicate the existence of that *person*—the first from whom I should demand justice for the wrong that has been done her—the first to whom I should apply for advice, for assistance, to establish her innocence, her——"

"There—there—my dear fellow, for heaven's sake, do not let my foolish observation distress and agitate you so," observed Charles, in a hurried tone. "I am sure I did not mean——that is to say, it is quite impossible for me to judge—but we will talk of it some other time. I am really so unwell now, my head aches so confoundedly, and I am altogether so unhinged——"

Denzil closed the door after him, and, scarcely conscious what he was doing, or whither he went, hastily quitted the house.

Aware, however, that it would provoke inquiry, and occasion her anxiety, should he appear before his mother in his present state of excitement, he took an opposite direction to that which led to her residence, and continued to hurry on, regardless of the course he took, until at length he emerged from the crowded, narrow, and dirty streets, through which he had been threading his way, desirous only of shunning observation, and of flying, if possible, from the painful and mortifying thoughts which oppressed him, into one of the most quiet and retired suburbs of the city. The comparative purity of the air, and the calmness that reigned around him, seemed to restore him to some degree of tranquillity. His hurried step relaxed, the intense throbbing of his heart abated, and the feelings of wounded pride and of filial affection, which the remarks of his friend had excited to such a painful excess, became calmed into melancholy regret that circumstances should have arisen to occasion the opportunity for such observations.

He was still lingering along, uncertain which way to take, and undetermined whether to return home or to pay his purposed visit to his mother, when his attention was drawn to a person who was viewing him, with evident curiosity, and more than common observation, from the opposite side of the street.

This person was an elderly gentleman, whose dress and deportment betrayed him to be an Englishman, and whose features, even at that distance, seemed to Denzil to be familiar to him.

Anxious at that moment, however, rather to shun than to court the observation of any one to whom there was a probability of his being known, Denzil was on the

point of turning away, when the gentleman, making a sign to him to stop, crossed the street, and greeted him heartily, observing, there were few persons in the world whom he should meet with more pleasure.

The latter recognised him at once as an old friend of Mr. Levison's, who had several times dined with the family during their residence in St. James's Place; and, struck with the possibility that the old gentleman might possess some knowledge of Mr. Levison's present abode, he expressed himself with so much cordiality, in return, that Mr. Dormer entered at once into a long chat; in the course of which he mentioned that he had only a few days before left London, his wife having been recommended to a warmer climate than England, for the restoration of her health; and, in conclusion, invited him, in the most pressing terms, to go home with him, and take a family dinner, adding——

"If the air of Paris has not spoiled your taste, it will, perhaps, be some inducement to you to come, when I tell you that it will be an *English* dinner, as far as cookery goes; for I have brought my own old cook with me, as I abhor their *ragouts* and *bouillies*, and their other various ways of murdering good victuals."

Denzil smiled, and was about to decline for the present the invitation, when he suddenly recollected Charles, and considered that Mr. Dormer, who was a lively and intelligent companion, and one who had seen a great deal of the world, without having had his warm feelings blunted, or his liberal views contracted by the intercourse, might prove a useful auxiliary in withdrawing the latter from the idle and pernicious habits which he seemed to have formed.

"You are not aware, I suppose, my dear sir, that I have a companion here, who has stronger claims to your kind consideration than I can pretend to."

Mr. Dormer looked surprised, and Denzil added—

"Charles Levison, the nephew of your old friend, is here, and, for the present, my guest."

"Charles here!" repeated Mr. Dormer, with increased surprise, "you do indeed astonish me! And where, then, is his giddy, foolish wife? She is not come, too, I hope, to add to her stock of airs and follies, by an importation of French fashions and French vices?"

"Mrs. Levison is, I believe, with her mother in Cumberland," replied Denzil, recollecting, for the first time, that the person with whom he was conversing, was a near relation to the wife of Charles.

"I am glad to hear it—very glad to hear it," observed Mr. Dormer. "It is the wisest thing they have done, since they came together. And so, Charles is here, and as thoughtless and wild, I suppose, as ever?"

"I hope not," returned Denzil, colouring slightly, as a recollection of the last evening's transactions crossed his mind; "at least," he added, "I left him this morning, deeply reflecting, and, I believe, heartily ashamed of past follies."

"It is quite time, indeed, that he should begin to think," said Mr. Dormer. "However, as I am not one of those who think that young people are only to be reclaimed by harshness and severity, I shall be glad to see Charles; and, if I can assist him in retrieving the embarrassments, which, I suspect, his extravagance has brought upon him, I will do it to the full extent of my power. But you must come home with me now, for I have more

to say to you than I can say here, and some questions to ask, and which I would fain ask before I see Charles, with whom, I suspect, I have less cause to be angry than with you, on the principle that where much is given, much is expected. Charles always *was* a simpleton, but you——Well, never mind, we will say more of that anon—so come with me!"

Denzil felt surprised, and somewhat agitated; but he offered no denial to Mr. Dormer's proposal, and in a few minutes they reached the house at which, as Mr. Dormer observed, he had found refuge from the dirt and bustle of the more populous parts of the city.

In the large handsome apartment into which Denzil followed his companion, a young lady was seated at a drawing.

"Rosa, my dear," observed Mr. Dormer, as she quitted her seat to return, with some confusion, the unexpected salutation of the stranger, "Rosa, this is Mr. Montgomery—the young man of whom you have heard me speak, as the ward of my friend Levison. Mr. Montgomery—my niece, Miss Somerville."

Rosa's blush deepened still more at this introduction, and she looked at her uncle, as if inquiring whether she was expected to stay or to withdraw.

"You will be glad to hear, my dear," he observed, "that your cousin Emma is gone down to her mother in Cumberland."

"Poor thing! poor girl!" observed the young lady, tears starting into her fine hazel eyes, and apparently forgetting the presence of a third person. "I am indeed rejoiced to hear it! Oh, I hope her mother will treat her kindly—that she will not add bitterness to the regret

she no doubt must feel. But I am afraid—my aunt is so very passionate, and Emma——"

"Emma! if her mother were to lock her up, and keep her upon bread and water for a twelvemonth, it would be no more than she deserves!" said Mr. Dormer.

"That is so like you, uncle," observed Miss Somerville, smiling amid her tears, "always preaching and threatening severity, and always practising the reverse."

"Yes, yes—because you have got the upper hand of me, and presume upon my indulgence," said her uncle; "but go to your aunt, my dear, and tell her the good news that Mr. Montgomery has brought; and tell her too, that the foolish boy, Emma's husband, is here in Paris, and that I expect he will dine with us to-day; and that we must try and forget all that has passed, and see if we cannot put a little sense into his head for the future."

The young lady departed, evidently delighted with her errand, and Mr. Dormer, looking after her, observed——

"There goes the pride, the comfort, and the only care of my old age, Mr. Montgomery——one who, reared amidst luxury and dissipation, has had sense and feeling enough to contemn its allurements, and has now, for three years, been the voluntary companion of a querulous old man, and a sickly complaining old woman, without even expressing a wish to share amusements which they could no longer enjoy; or even reminding them that she was heiress to twenty thousand pounds, and free to choose her own guardian. But I want to talk to you of your own affairs, instead of gossiping about my Rosa—and, first, what is the reason I find you here in Paris, and Mr. Levison and his family in London?"

"In London!" repeated Denzil, breathless with surprise, and scarcely believing the evidence of his ears.

"Yes, in London. Did you not know that they arrived there, a week since? Did not Charles know it?"

"Certainly not," replied Denzil; "he came over here purposely to seek an interview with his uncle, and has been suffering the greatest chagrin and disappointment at my being unable to give him any intelligence of the route he had taken."

"They were in London, then, and at an hotel in Bruton Street, when I quitted it. I saw my old friend for a few minutes, on the very morning we left, and learned from him that he was as yet undecided how long he should remain there. I hardly know whether I ought to communicate some other intelligence I gained—not from him, but from that dear old creature, aunt Rachael, when he had left us; but as, according to appearances, all that I expected would take place——in plain terms, as all connexion between you and Fanny seems at an end, I may not perhaps do wrong in telling you that she is likely to make a very splendid alliance—no less than an Earl—the Earl of Raeburn, who has recently come to his title, and who, it appears, was the means of rescuing her from the danger of being drowned, during an excursion on the water while in Switzerland, whither they went, it seemed, after they quitted France."

"Then my doom is sealed!" exclaimed Denzil, "I had, till now, still some hope—but it is all over—all fled now!"

"Can it be possible that I have been mistaken?" said Mr. Dormer, regarding him with surprise. "I thought, from Rachel's reply to my questions, that you had volun-

tarily surrendered your claims, and, indeed, I imagined that you had formed some other connexion."

"Never! never!" exclaimed Denzil, in deep emotion. Never can I——but it is of no avail! All, now, is over—and I can only pray that she may be happy—happier than I can ever hope to be! Yet, so soon—so soon to forget me! but I will not murmur, I will endeavour to forget—I will pray for her happiness. Oh, yes, most ardently do I pray that she may find that happiness which is denied to me, and which I can never, never know!"

"Do not talk thus despairingly, my young friend," said Mr. Dormer; "that it is no trifling disappointment you have met with, if, as I have no reason to doubt, your heart was really given to Fanny Levison, I am very willing to allow. At your age, I know, I should have thought, like you, that the loss was irreparable; but trust the experience of one who has seen forty years more than you have yet to boast, who knows that the deepest wounds are healed by time—and that the most violent grief subsides into a calm. Nay, do not shake your head in that despairing manner," he continued, with a smile, "for I shall live yet to hear you acknowledge that I was right, and wonder at your own folly in thinking it impossible that there could be any happiness in store for you."

Denzil did not reply, but his look evinced that he could not agree with his kind friend; and the latter, anxious to divert him from dwelling on this dispiriting subject, immediately reverted to Charles, of whom he related some circumstances, which had come to his knowledge, that utterly astonished the pure heart of Denzil, who could not conceive how it was possible that

one, who had been educated in the same manner as himself, and had begun his career in the world with so many superior advantages, could at once have launched into such extravagant folly and vice.

Mr. Dormer, however, though he spoke thus freely of him, was evidently far more inclined to palliate and excuse, than condemn the conduct of this thoughtless young man; and again and again he repeated his determination, if Charles would freely and frankly confide in him, to assist, to the utmost of his abilities, in placing him once more in respectability and independence; in which, he doubted not, Mr. Levison, sen., would, upon his representation and recommendations, instantly and heartily concur.

"At the same time, my good young friend," concluded Mr. Dormer, "I must have a solemn pledge from Charles, that he will not on any account renew his connexions with those who have been the principal movers in the scenes he has lately engaged in; and, above all, he must be careful, during the time he remains here, that he steers clear of the numerous dissipated and vicious characters of his own country, whom he will encounter in this place, and who are ever on the watch to trepan the thoughtless and unwary into their nets."

Denzil's cheek crimsoned, as he recollected the imprudence of which his companion had recently been guilty on this head; but, considering that he had already seen his error, he did not think it necessary to mention the circumstance to Mr. Dormer, and therefore took his leave, promising to return with Charles, at the appointed dinner-hour.

CHAPTER XXII.

"The bright and searching glance of her Ithuriel eye
Might even the sternest hypocrite defy
To meet it unappall'd ;—'twould almost seem,
As though, epitomised in one deep beam,
Her full collected soul upon the heart,
Whate'er its mask, she strove at once to dart:
And few may brave the talisman that 's hid
'Neath the dark fringes of her drooping lid."

Impressed with the sincerest respect for Mr. Dormer, and calculating, with true feeling and pleasure, on the good effects which the acquisition of so valuable a friend would have upon Charles, Denzil commenced his return towards the hotel, where he expected to find the latter, still suffering from the effects of that penitence and remorse which he (Denzil) imagined he must feel when reflecting on the last night's imprudence, and his former conduct, which he must be convinced had brought misery and disgrace, not only on himself, but on his dearest connexions.

Anxious, therefore, to impart to him consolation, and, by change of scene and society, to soothe his wounded spirit, the kind-hearted Denzil hastened along, thinking every moment an age, until he reached him, and scarcely able to restrain his impatience within bounds, at the numerous obstacles which the crowded and narrow streets, now in all the bustle of the busiest part of the day, presented to his speed.

Of these obstacles, none who have not traversed the narrow streets of Paris, on foot, after a heavy rain, can

form any idea. The large pools of mud and water, which, from the want of pavement, must be crossed over upon rotten and tottering planks—the time that is lost, and the danger that accrues from standing up, crushed almost to the wall, by the numerous vehicles which dash along, totally regardless of the safety of those whom they may encounter.

In no place, probably, in the world, is the loss of human life, or the endangering of personal safety, looked upon with such indifference as in the good city of Paris; and Denzil never had more occasion to remark this, than now, when, with the utmost difficulty, he succeeded in saving himself, more than once, from being knocked down and trampled upon by the carelessness and reckless speed of the numerous *cochers* who passed him.

It was upon one of these occasions that he was withdrawn from the reverie which, in spite of the necessity of being cautious, he could not help falling into, and suddenly lifted his eyes to the person who had saluted him with the English exclamation, of "Hoy! hoy!" which is usually addressed to those who place themselves in danger of an approaching carriage; but what was his surprise, his grief, and his consternation, when he discovered that it was from Charles Levison himself that he had received the caution which obliged him to seek safety, by jamming himself up against the wall of a house, while the britschka, in which the latter was seated by the side of Mrs. Wilmington, the *ci-devant* Julia Delaney, passed him.

The air of gloom and despondency which Charles's countenance had worn when Denzil left him, was entirely gone; and as he nodded over his shoulder to the latter, with his usual careless familiarity, his look expressed

rather triumph and gaiety, than any confusion or shame at this open defiance of all that Denzil had said to him, on the folly and imprudence of forming such a connexion.

All Denzil's visions of repaying the kindness of Mr. Levison towards himself, by rescuing his nephew from the certain ruin into which he was precipitating himself, vanished at the moment he beheld him thus accompanied; and he stood still, gazing after the vehicle, until it was out of sight, scarcely crediting the evidence of his senses.

No longer anxious to reach his home, he loitered for nearly an hour on his way thither, revolving in his mind what plea he should offer to Mr. Dormer, for the non-appearance of Charles, after an invitation so amicable and conciliatory as that which had been given by the latter gentleman.

On the staircase of the hotel, he was met by his faithful servant, Ned, whose looks betrayed that something had occurred to displease and disconcert him; but Denzil was at that moment too much absorbed in his own painful reflections to be desirous of sharing another's troubles; and he would, therefore, have proceeded onward, without inquiry, but Ned was too much accustomed to make his master the arbiter of his disputes, and the depositary of his complaints, to suffer him to pass on in silence.

"Master Charles is gone out, sir!" he observed, in a sullen tone.

"I know it, Ned," replied his master.

Ned looked inquiringly in his face.

"Then you know, too, who he's gone with, mayhap?" rejoined the man.

"Yes," said Denzil, sighing; "I do know, Ned—for I saw them together."

"And oughtn't Master Charles to be ashamed o' himsel?—Don't you think, sir," returned Ned, "that he be disgracing the family, by driving about with that painted Jezabel? I could not believe my own eyes, when I saw her face, in the fine new-fangled thing they call a—— I forget what—but it's no matter! Only, I know, that though I'm but a poor servant, I wouldn't be seen with *she*, if I was to be paid a hundred pounds for it."

"You are quite right, Ned," returned Denzil, again sighing, "but we will hope he will see his error soon; I have done my best to——"

"And so have I, sir," interrupted Ned, warmly; "for as soon as ever I saw her drive up to the door, like a—— but I won't soil my mouth with saying what she looks like, for all her beauty and sweet looks——howsomever, I went up to him, and told him, in plain words, that I hoped he wasn't going to demean himself, and disgrace you, so much as to be going out with one that had like to have been your ruin and your death, and who was——"

"Say no more, Ned," exclaimed Denzil, "I could not expect that Charles would yield to considerations for me, that which he denies to himself. He knows, he must know, that he is rushing on to certain, irretrievable ruin; and if that is not sufficient to withhold him, I cannot expect that any considerations towards me will be likely to operate—but what did he reply, Ned, to your remonstrances?"

"He called me what I wouldn't have put up with from anybody but the nephew of my good master," returned Ned, angrily; "and when I mentioned you, sir, and said I knew you would be greatly hurt and displeased, he told me to go and cant along with you, and not presume to

dictate to him. Lord knows," continued Ned, brushing away a tear with the back of his hand, "I had no thought of any thing but for his good—for I'm as sorry as if he was my own brother, to see him in a wrong way; and I can tell very well by his looks that he's as unhappy as can be, and yet, I suppose, he'll go on now bringing more trouble on himself, and my poor old master, who, I am sure, has had quite enough of it, one way or another; for somehow every thing's turned out quite clean *con-tra-ry*, as one may say. There's you, Mr. Denzil—see what trouble he's had about you, though it's not been your fault, that I must say. And then there's Miss Fanny, poor thing——"

"All his anxieties are over, at least, Ned, on her account," replied Denzil, making an effort to speak with calmness, "for Miss Levison is on the point of being happily married to a man of rank and fortune."

Ned opened his eyes to their fullest extent, and remained for a minute silently staring at his master, who, on his part, felt no inclination to break the silence.

"Miss Fanny going to be married!" at length exclaimed the honest and plain-speaking domestic; "it can't never be possible that she's so unfaithful."

Denzil shook his head, without uttering a word.

"Well, then, I'll only say there's no believing none of womankind—for I'd have been sworn she would no more have thought of having anybody but you, Mr. Denzil, than I should of being married to the queen of England! Laws, when I saw her pale face bending over you, when you laid sick; and when I've seen her bright sparkling eyes, after you got well, watching you, when you did'nt see her, I've thought what a happy man you would be,

with one who loved you so dearly; and even when she left you, I knew it was'nt her wish to go: and I shall never forget her when she put a guinea into my hand and said, so sweetly and so mournfully——'Edward, you have always been a good and faithful servant to your master, and pray keep a watchful eye over his health, and do not let him neglect himself—for I know he is not very careful.' "

"Did she do so?" exclaimed Denzil, "heaven bless her, and grant she may be happy!"

"I don't wish so at all," observed Ned, "if she is so falsehearted as to marry another—but so it is with all womankind! They are all so easily taken in, if there's money and titles in the way; and yet, Miss Fanny always seemed to be such an angel, that I never could have believed it of her; and, perhaps, after all, she may not be so much to blame—for certainly my old master's mind was poisoned against you, by somebody or another; and, poor thing, she has suffered herself to be overpersuaded to what, may be, she'll bitterly repent!"

"I hope not, most fervently I hope not," exclaimed Denzil; "rather, ten thousand times rather, would I believe her the most false and fickle of her sex, than think that she is wretched, with a man whom she cannot love! But I must not, dare not think of this—I must try, henceforth, to forget that she has ever been to me more than that which once I thought her—a dear and valued sister! Would that this rash and thoughtless Charles were returned! How much I have to impart to him! much that ought to make him happy and grateful, and yet which, I fear, he will contrive to overthrow by his own imprudence."

respecting my motives for what you are pleased to style hypocrisy, they are beneath even my contempt—but it would be well for you, I suspect, if you would think proper to adopt some little——"

"Oh, yes, I have no doubt it would be mighty proper," interrupted Charles, hastily; "but I neither can or will play the hypocrite, and so you may preach as long as you please!"

Denzil felt too much irritated and hurt, to reply with calmness; and he therefore wisely remained silent, until Charles, suddenly observing the preparation which his companion was making to go out, said—

"I suppose, then, I am to dine by myself, to-day—for it appears you are engaged out!"

"I am engaged where you were likewise invited, Charles," replied Denzil; "and where you would have been truly welcome, had not your imprudence defeated the good which I had hoped to have effected for you. I am going to dine with Mr. Dormer, whose truly kind intentions towards you deserved a far different return than that which it appears you have made. In fact, Charles, it was with the view of entering into some arrangements to remove the embarrassments you are at present suffering, and placing you once more independently in the world, that this engagement was made; and though I feel that your imprudence will not exonerate me from the charge of incivility and disrespect, should I not keep it, yet I assure you that I am so far from anticipating any pleasure from the visit, that I would much rather stay at home, could I do so with propriety."

"What an unlucky dog I am!" exclaimed Charles, at once comprehending the full force of the advantages he

had forfeited; "but how could I foresee that the puritanical old fellow was so well inclined towards me; for, when I was in London, he would not condescend to notice either Emma or me; and when we sent his niece a card of invitation to a ball, he actually sent it back, with an insulting note to Emma, desiring her never again to take the liberty of considering Miss Somerville as one of her acquaintance, though they are first cousins, you know, Denzil, and were like sisters, when they were children!"

"Yes, and Miss Somerville still retains all the kindness and affection of a sister towards your wife, Charles," returned Denzil; "and will, I am sure, be as much disappointed as I am, at your having frustrated the kind intentions which her uncle had entertained towards you."

The countenance of Charles betrayed considerable confusion; but, ever unwilling to acknowledge himself in error, he merely observed——

"Well, it is of no use fretting for what is done, and can't be undone; and, after all, what great harm have I committed? It would be well for Mr. Dormer, as well as many more, I dare say, if they had nothing else to reproach themselves with, than having driven out a pretty woman for a morning's ride, and bought her a fan because she took a fancy to it—and that, I am sure, is all I have been guilty of!"—And he walked out of the room whistling, with an air of *nonchalance*, which, it was very evident, was only assumed to conceal the extent of his vexation at what he had heard.

Mr. Dormer's reception of Denzil was, though he tried to conceal it under a studied politeness, much less

friendly and familiar than his manners had been in the morning. Rosa Somerville's eyes betrayed that she had been weeping, and Mrs. Dormer, whom Denzil had never seen before, was as cold and ceremonious as it was possible to be towards him.

Not a word was said respecting Charles's absence, and Denzil, who felt that it would have been impossible for him to have offered any thing like an excuse for him, was greatly relieved by the silence which was preserved respecting him.

But this satisfaction was not destined to be of very long duration—the ladies retired almost immediately upon the removal of the cloth, and the small degree of vivacity which Mr. Dormer had kept up, while they were present, almost immediately gave place to a gloomy silence.

Denzil felt himself for some minutes greatly embarrassed; he saw that Mr. Dormer expected him to recur to the subject which had occupied their attention in the morning, and he felt most reluctant to say any thing which could be misinterpreted by the former.

Convinced, however, at length, that Mr. Dormer felt displeased at his silence, he ventured to say——

"You met Charles Levison, I understand, sir, this morning, after we parted——"

"Yes, I did meet with him, Mr. Montgomery," replied the old gentleman, testily, "and was exceedingly gratified to perceive the proofs of amendment and contrition, of which you spoke so feelingly this morning, most strikingly displayed. I suppose you know, sir," he continued, "in whose society I met Mr. Levison, and how he was occupied? A pretty good evidence, sir, of

his penitence, to be seen, immediately upon his arrival here, in the society of the man to whom he, in a great measure, owes his ruin, and whose baneful breath has, I fear, irreparably poisoned the reputation of the poor girl who has had the misfortune——"

"Good heavens! I knew not that there was any one with him but a female!" exclaimed Denzil.

"And that female, Mr. Montgomery," rejoined Mr. Dormer, "that female, who was she? Can you look me in the face, sir, and tell me that she was one with whom he ought to be seen? What could she be, to——"

"My dear sir," interrupted Denzil, hastily, "do not mistake me—do not suppose, for one moment, that I am intending to vindicate Charles Levison, or to defend the character of that woman, for whom no living being can entertain a more perfect contempt than I do—but I only spoke of my surprise at hearing there was a third person, whom he had not mentioned to me."

"No, sir, I do not suppose he would have mentioned to you, one who has—but no matter, I do not wish to have anything to do with him—I have no right to dictate whom he shall associate with—only, when I hear of his contrition and penitence, I cannot help expressing——"

"I do not wonder, my dear sir, at your feeling angry and disappointed," observed Denzil; "but, believe me, you are not less so than I am. I hope and trust, however, that you will do me the justice to believe that I did not intentionally deceive you, but was myself deceived, when I expressed my belief that Charles was conscious of the impropriety of his past conduct. Indeed, indeed,

highly pleasing. Her portfolio of drawings, too, afforded him a rich treat, and her glowing blush, as he expressed his admiration, rendered still more lovely her beautiful face. The gentle playfulness of her manners with her uncle, and the watchful yet unobtrusive attention with which she regarded her invalid aunt, all combined to render her the most interesting and attractive being he had ever beheld; yet, even when he gazed on her with the greatest admiration, his thoughts were wandering to another; and Rosa Somerville was less the subject of his admiration, than Fanny Levison. Yet, in no one point was the latter superior to the lovely girl who was now before him, except in that nameless grace, that powerful attraction, with which the lover ever invests the object of his affections.

Denzil was now completely at home with this amiable family—Mrs. Dormer, who had lost a son under circumstances of peculiar affliction, a few years before, gazed upon his fine expressive countenance till tears of fond remembrance dimmed her mild eyes; and Mr. Dormer, delighted to renew the recollections of his own youth with one who could enter so heartily into his feelings, and whose intelligent and occasionally arch and humorous remarks heightened and improved whatever was the subject of conversation, seemed surprised and sorry when the announcement of eleven o'clock warned them that it was time to separate.

"A few words on the subject of Charles Levison, my young friend," he observed, as they stood together in the hall, waiting for the *fiacre* to come up to the door. "I would still, if it were in my power, redeem him from ruin—but I dare not now ask you to bring him here—it would be an insult to the females of my family, after

what Rosa unfortunately saw and heard yesterday; but I will, if you will not consider me an intruder, breakfast with you to-morrow morning, and I shall then have an opportunity of judging, from his own lips, what prospect there is of being able to do for him that which I am most anxious to perform, less for his own sake, I acknowledge, than for those with whom he is, unfortunately for them, so intimately connected."

Denzil pressed the hand which was held out to him, and, having mentioned the breakfast hour, departed.

"Is Mr. Levison gone to bed?" he inquired of one of the servants, who awaited his approach.

"No, sare—he have one, two, tree gentilhomme wid him—dey wait for you for *souper*."

"I have supped, and shall retire immediately—tell Charles so, Ned," observed Denzil, to his servant, who at that moment came forward to receive him.

"I will tell him so, sir, if you please," returned Ned, in a reluctant tone; "but, really, only I know I oughtn't to take upon me to give advice——"

"Speak out freely, Ned—what is it you would advise?" replied his master.

"Why, then, sir, I think if you were to go among them, it might check them, and shame them a little—for they have been getting on at a fine rate for these last three hours; and it's quite plain that Mr. Charles is only being made a fool of. I couldn't have thought it of Mr. St. George, for though I knew he was a wild gentleman, I didn't think he would have encouraged anything that was wrong; but there they have been drinking and gambling, and——but it's no matter, only I think you might shame them a little, and——"

Denzil waited to hear no more, but walked forward to the room, where their noise betrayed that Ned had not exaggerated, in his account of their intemperance.

"Here's the real Simon Pure, at last!" vociferated Charles, as Denzil entered. "Well, my boy, how have you passed the evening? Very rationally, piously, morally, eh? Held the same prayer-book as the pretty Rosa, and sung second to the evening hymn, haven't I hit it now?"

Though vexed and mortified, Denzil could not forbear joining in the laugh which this created.

"Mr. Montgomery's piety sits well upon him, however," observed St. George, looking at him with an air of thoughtfulness; "I never saw him look better, or handsomer, in my life."

"Who wouldn't look well and handsome, who has passed a whole evening in the society of Rosa Somerville —whose beauty is enough to create a life, even in the ribs of death?" observed one of the party, whom Denzil did not recollect to have seen before, but who had been, on his first entrance, introduced to him by St. George as Mr. Aubigné.

"Well, I confess, I never saw this surpassing loveliness," observed another, whom Denzil immediately recognised as the person of whom Mr. Dormer had spoken with so much contempt, as having been at the bottom of all Charles Levison's extravagance and folly; "nevertheless," he continued, "I shall take the liberty of proposing her health in a bumper."

Denzil's fine countenance glowed with indignation as he heard the libertine jests, the unlicensed remarks, and the freedom with which the name of this lovely and

modest girl was bandied about from one to another. Unaccustomed to mix in such society as that which he was now reluctantly forced into, he could scarcely restrain himself from giving vent to his feelings; and the hesitating manner in which he lifted the glass to his lips, and the low and hurried tone in which he repeated the name which he considered degraded by being uttered in such company, at once excited the derision of his companions, and induced them to persevere in the remarks which they saw excited his uneasiness.

For some time Denzil bore this with comparative calmness; but when, at length, Charles, as if determined to probe him to the quick, introduced the name of Fanny Levison, he became unable to endure it any longer, and hastily rising from the chair, exclaimed——

"*Her* name shall not be sported with, Mr. Levison. If the ties of blood have no influence over you, those of gratitude are too forcibly felt by me, to allow me patiently to hear your cousin's name thus lightly spoken of!"

"Aha!" observed one of the party, "*gratitude!* You are a lucky fellow, Mr. Montgomery—gratitude to a fair lady, is not a very burthensome feeling, I should think."

"I wish Miss Levison would try *my* gratitude," added St. George. "Talk of your Julias and Rosas! I would give all the charms they ever possessed, for one smile from the lovely lips of Fanny Levison!"

Denzil's blood boiled in his veins, but when, in addition to this impertinence, he heard Charles, in a voice which, though intended to be heard only by St. George, was sufficiently audible for the whole room to comprehend it, utter a remark derogatory to the honour of her

whose very name should have been sacred with him, the rage, which Denzil had so long restrained, burst forth, and before Charles had time to apprehend the danger that menaced him, he was levelled to the ground, by a blow from that hand, which had so often shielded him from danger, so often grasped his, in all the cordiality of fraternal love.

A scene of direful confusion ensued—enfuriated with wine, and maddened by the blow he smarted under, Charles resisted every effort of his companions to hold him;—the table, bottles, glasses, all were upset and broken; and Denzil, with whom repentance had instantly followed the violence he had committed, was now, in his turn, a sufferer from the rage he had excited in the bosom of his early friend and companion. Charles, indeed, now fought with all the strength and fury, but with the same want of caution and prudence, as a maniac; while Denzil, fully awakened to the consequences and disgraceful nature of the contest in which he had engaged, endeavoured only to ward off the blows of his opponent, and prevent his doing any farther mischief. All his efforts, however, could not prevent his receiving several severe blows, and he would have been completely overpowered by the violence and reckless fury of Charles, had not his servant Ned, alarmed by the uproar, rushed into the room, and thrown himself between them.

"Oh, my dear master, oh, Mr. Charles!" he exclaimed, "for heaven's sake, consider! Consider my poor master, and Miss Fanny, and poor Miss Rachel. Oh, their hearts would be broken, if they could see this! Oh, Mr. Charles!—Well, then, sir, if you won't be

quiet by fair means——" And in a moment Charles was pinioned fast down in a chair, by the athletic youth, who having both the advantage of coolness and superior strength, held him there, in spite of all his struggles and execrations, until he was so completely exhausted as to be glad to give the assurance which Ned insisted upon, that he would not strike another blow, but would go quietly to bed.

The rage which was kindled in Denzil's bosom, was by this time totally subdued; and, as Charles passed him, he held out his hand, observing——

"Charles, Charles, I am sorry, very sorry that this should have happened!"

"Curse your sorrow, and you, too, you vile hypocrite!" exclaimed Charles, dashing away the proffered hand. "It is all of a piece with your whole conduct!" he continued; "your life has been all deception, and——"

"Master—sir—Mr. Montgomery—pray don't listen to him!—don't speak to him!" exclaimed Ned, in accents of terror. "He'll be sorry to-morrow, indeed he will!"

"Never!" said Charles, with vehemence; "you think I am drunk, Denzil, and that I know not what I say—but I do know, well enough!—I know, I have long known, that you are a cool, calculating villain, and that it is your fawning hypocrisy that has made my uncle my enemy! But he *shall* know you, he shall see you in your true colours, and he shall judge whether——"

"I will hear you no longer, Mr. Levison!" interrupted Denzil, every nerve quivering with agony, at this false and malicious accusation, so totally unlooked-for, and unexpected from one whose worst faults, in the eyes of his friend, had been credulity, and blind faith in the

heal our wounds. I shall have a fine black eye, I suspect," putting his hand up to his face, "what the devil will Julia say to it, to-morrow? and I have promised her——"

"And what the devil business has Julia with your black eye? or what right had you to promise her anything?" interrupted St. George. "Come, Mr. Levison, you and I must now have a little word of explanation, if you please; for, whatever you may think, I see no reason why you should imagine yourself privileged to talk and act towards Julia as if——"

"Lord, lord, Mr. St. George," interrupted Ned, who now began to fear another quarrel, and was proud of the good his interference had effected, "you don't surely think any thing of what Mr. Charles says, or does; if you did but know him as well as I do——"

"Why, you rascal, what do you mean?" interrupted Charles, angrily.

"I only mean, sir, that you never do any thing with a bad intention, you know you don't," replied Ned; "and all the scrapes you ever got into, and you know they've been a good many—and many a time I've got you out of 'em,—they've all been only for want of thought, or just because you haven't had any thing better to do."

St. George burst into a loud laugh, and all his anger seemed dispelled in a minute.

"Ned is certainly the most convincing orator in the world," he observed. "I know not how he has acquired the talent, but he never fails to succeed, on whatever side he embarks."

"Because I never speak nothing but the truth, sir," observed Ned, his open, honest countenance flushing with triumph at this second instance of his success; "and,

though I know I've no business to make so bold here, yet I must say that if gentlemen would only do as I do, just ask their own consciences, before they say or do any thing, whether they would like it to be done to them,—there wouldn't be half so much wickedness and quarrelling as there is among great folks."

"Hear him! hear him! hear him!" shouted the whole room, with the exception of Denzil, who, vexed, dispirited, and dissatisfied, both with himself and all around him, longed only to escape, without giving room for observation or sneering remark, from the scene of riot and confusion which was so disconsonant to him. Towards Charles he now felt no other sensation than pity—yet the accusations, the malicious epithets which the latter had applied to him, still dwelt painfully on his memory, unfounded and undeserved as he felt them to be.

With Charles, however, all recollection of the cause of their quarrel seemed to have vanished; and though his swollen eye forbade him to forget that there had been violence between him and Denzil, he seemed to consider the matter as fully at rest between them, and was only anxious, as he said, that they should drown all care and sorrow in the bowl.

The punch which he had orderd was brought in, and Denzil, after enduring with pain, for another half hour, the folly and ribaldry which was circulated around it, had at length the opportunity, which he so ardently longed for, of retiring to his own chamber; his companions having now become so completely inebriated as not to oppose, or even observe his retreat.

CHAPTER XXIII.

> "Tell me, thou syren Hope, deceiver, say
> Where is the promised period of my woes?
> Full three long years have roll'd away,
> And yet I weep, a stranger to repose."

WEARIED with the extraordinary exertions, both of mind and body, which he had been forced into on the preceding day, Denzil awoke not until the voice of Ned at his bed-side informed him that Mr. Dormer was already in the breakfast-room, and apparently chagrined at finding no one there to receive him.

Denzil started up—he had forgotten the engagement of the preceding night—forgotten Mr. Dormer—forgotten every thing, but the wrong that had been done him, and the probability that there were others who believed him to be the despicable character which Charles had represented him, and to whom it would be impossible to vindicate himself.

The name of Mr. Dormer brought with it a train of different ideas—he recollected all that the latter had said, and the purpose of his present visit; and, humiliated, vexed, and ashamed, both for himself and him who had been the primary cause of all his vexation, he prepared, as quickly as possible, to meet Mr. Dormer.

"Good gracious, sir, how your lip is cut, and your face bruised!" exclaimed Ned, as his master was dressing; "where could my eyes have been, not to see it last night? But, indeed, I was so frightened at what *might*

happen, that I did not think of what *had* happened. Law, law, what will the gentleman think?—and so precise, so neat, and so nice as he looks, too."

Denzil felt that Ned's observation might have been spared, for the smarting pains he endured had already suggested to him the unpleasantness of appearing before Mr. Dormer in such a plight. He looked in the glass, but shrunk back, more than ever chagrined; for his face not only bore the marks of the blows he had received, but the effects of the violent passions which had agitated him, and of the unusual quantity he had drunk. The colour had entirely left his cheeks, and his eyes, instead of possessing their usual animation, were heavy and blood-shotten.

"I cannot avoid it, however," he observed, "and therefore it is useless to reflect upon it;" and hurrying on his clothes, he hastened to the breakfast-room.

Mr. Dormer's looks betrayed his surprise and consternation—but he said nothing for some minutes; and Denzil, glad even of this short respite, busied himself at the breakfast-table.

"Will not Mr. Levison honour us with his company?" inquired Mr. Dormer, after looking several times towards the door, with considerable anxiety.

Denzil started at his own remissness, in not having sent to let Charles know that his company was expected.

"I will send and inquire, sir," he replied, with embarrassment, "but I am almost fearful that——"

"I see, sir, that I am too pressing in my services," observed Mr. Dormer, with evident chagrin; "but do not let me be an intruder, I beg. I am fearful that I have called you unseasonably from your repose."

"My dear sir, I hope—pray do not speak to me in this manner—I am already very, very unhappy, and if I lose your good opinion——" Denzil stopped suddenly, for he felt at that moment the full force of the injury which Charles had done him.

"Well, well, I am sure, Denzil, I have no wish to think otherwise than well of you," replied Mr. Dormer; "but, really, I am so disappointed in my expectations—my reception has been so different to what I anticipated—but do explain what has been the matter. Charles, surely, has not been the cause of your altered appearance. He has not——"

"Charles has been very imprudent again," replied Denzil; "but I have to blame my own impetuosity and rashness, in a great measure, for these pretty beauty-spots,"—and he tried to force a smile.

"My dear lad, what *has* been the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Dormer, resuming all his former kindness of manner.

Denzil replied by briefly detailing the occurrences of the preceding evening, omitting only that part in which Miss Somerville's name had been called in question.

Mr. Dormer's eyes kindled with indignation towards the misguided young man, for whom he had so greatly interested himself, while at the same time he expressed himself highly pleased with the manner in which Denzil had acted.

"You are a noble fellow, Denzil," he exclaimed; "may you always preserve your heart as uncorrupted, and your habits as untainted by society, as they now are! I know, too well, to what extremes young men will often go, in defiance of their own hearts and better judg-

ment. It would have been wiser, perhaps, on your part, to have let it all pass unnoticed, but it was an error of the head, which does honour to the heart. I hope, however, that you had the best of the contest, and that Mr. Charles has not escaped scot-free."

"I am fearful, indeed, sir, that he received some rather severe marks—more, however, from his own intemperance than mine," said Denzil.

"I am glad of it—glad of it, with all my heart!" exclaimed Mr. Dormer. "I hope he will not be able to shew his face for a month—I should like to see him, too —I should like to see how the rascal would look!"

He had scarcely finished speaking, before Charles entered the room, evidently quite unprepared to encounter Mr. Dormer, whom he stared at for some moments, without appearing to recognise.

"You do not seem to know me, Mr. Levison," observed the latter; "and, really, I should have scarcely recognised you, had I not been prepared to expect you. Is it this fine climate, that has made such a wonderful alteration in your appearance?"

"You are pleased to be facetious, sir," said Charles, trying to conceal his confusion under an appearance of *nonchalance*. "I am, however, glad to see that *you* still retain your usual good health and spirits."

"Yes, I still keep on 'the even tenor of my way,'" replied Mr. Dormer, "but come, sit down and take your breakfast, and perhaps we shall find some means of restoring *you* to your usual good spirits."

Charles sighed heavily, and stole a look at Denzil, whose eyes he had hitherto avoided; but he met there no expression but of kindness and commiseration, and,

by degrees, the sense of shame and humiliation, so novel to him, subsided before the efforts which both Denzil and Mr. Dormer made to reconcile him to himself, and to convince him of their friendly intentions towards him.

All allusions to the affray of the preceding night were carefully avoided, though Mr. Dormer could not help stealing occasionally a sly look at Denzil, in derision and mischievous exultation at the rueful figure which their companion made, with his eye bound up, and sundry other visible signs of the chastisement he had received.

They had not finished breakfast, before St. George, accompanied by Mr. Aubigné, entered the room, evidently prepared to indulge their satirical wit at the expense of Charles and Denzil.

At sight of Mr. Dormer, however, they both drew back, and Mr. Aubigné uttering a confused apology, would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Dormer risen and prevented it.

"So, sir," he observed, "we have met once more, it seems; and, as usual, very little to the satisfaction of either. This, then, is the penitence, the reformation you promised?—These are the honest exertions, by which you were to redeem your character, and provide for your necessities? I find you again, it seems, mingling with the thoughtless and the dissipated—I know not that there are any here" (looking earnestly at St. George) "who deserve a worse denomination—though sure I am, that, to be associated with a scoundrel and a robber, as you are——"

"A robber!" exclaimed Mr. St. George, "that is a harsh term, sir! I know not who you are, but, I trust, my friend here——"

"Oh, *your friend*, you avow him to be, sir," interrupted Mr. Dormer. "Then, to you, I imagine, no justification of the appellation I have used towards him is necessary. You are, probably," he added, significantly, "well acquainted with his character; but, as I cannot suppose my young friends here," (pointing to Charles and Denzil,) "are so well informed, I shall take the liberty of telling them that this accomplished gentleman, who seems to be on such familiar terms with them and you, once honoured me so far as to stand behind my chair at dinner—open the door of my carriage—in short, was that unnecessary, useless thing, called *a footman;* in which capacity, I suppose, he picked up those second-hand airs, by which he has been enabled to sustain the character it appears he has assumed. But the worst is yet to come—for, not content with the ample wages he so lightly earned, he entered into a confederacy with some others, to rob me! Yes, that fashionable, well-looking gentleman there opened the door of my house at midnight, to those whom he well knew would not scruple to add the crime of murder to that of theft! The goodness of Providence defeated their intentions; and I, foolishly listening to the pleadings of a merciful disposition, rather than the dictates of stern justice, took pity on his youth—believed his professions of penitence—and suffered him to escape! Of his history since, I know nothing—nor should I now have exposed what I do know, had I not found him in the character of an impostor, who has, no doubt, been practising on your credulity, and would, before he quitted you, have undoubtedly given you ample reason to repent of your credulity. Say, young man—I know not by what name you call yourself—have I exaggerated in this account of our former acquaintance?"

"No, sir, it is all true!" replied the young man, in a faltering voice. "There is one part only that you have passed over in my story."

"And, pray, what is that, sir?" demanded Mr. Dormer, with earnestness.

"Only that you have omitted to state how many times, previous to that horrible night, your goodness had relieved me from the distress which my wretched predilection for gambling had so often brought upon me. Yes, sir, I acknowledge that the various sums of money which you so liberally bestowed upon me, under the belief that they were appropriated to the support of my widowed mother and a family of children, were all dissipated at the low gaming-house which I then frequented."

"And yet, with all this seeming remorse for your past actions," observed Mr. Dormer, in a softened tone, "what is now your mode of life? Can you look me in the face, and say that you are honestly maintaining the appearance you bear? Those clothes, that watch, and all the *et ceteras* that stamp you in appearance a man of fashion, are they the fruits of honest industry, or——"

"No, sir, I will not deceive you—I dare not," replied the young man; "but, when I acknowledge this, I will also ask you—I will appeal to your candour—what was I to do? You spared my life, it is true—for, probably, it would have been forfeited to the laws against which I had offended; but I had lost the means of supporting that life with honesty—my character was gone. I had never been used to work; and, if I had, who would have employed me! No, sir,—believe me, often and often have I been tempted even to reproach you for having saved my life, and left me without the means of maintaining it; as I would—yes, God knows my heart, I would—have

forsworn all those practices which now I am compelled to! Oh, how have I been tempted to curse the folly which bestowed upon me education and habits, and encouraged expectations to which I had not the slightest pretensions. But my poor weak mother believed her son was born to become a gentleman, and so she laboured patiently and indefatigably for years to maintain me in idleness. She died, and I was thrown upon the world, a helpless, useless being, as you properly styled me."

"I was not speaking of you, but the whole class of modern fine gentlemen's servants," observed Mr. Dormer; "but you are a strange young man—a very strange man," (and he wiped his eyes) "and if I were thoroughly convinced of your sincerity—Why did you not write to me? why did you not state all you have said so well now? I am sure you must have known enough of my character—you are competent enough to judge that I should not have been inaccessible to the voice of truth."

"I could not, sir," returned the young man, "for, having experienced the kindness and confidence of your disposition so often, I feared you would be induced to offer to take me back into your service; and that, of all things, I could not have borne to accept! I could not live to know that my every action was viewed with suspicion, by those who had regarded me with kindness and confidence. You, sir," and he cast down his eyes with increased confusion, "you, I am not alluding to—for well I know that had you again taken me into your service I should have experienced no mistrust or suspicion—but there were others—oh, I could have died sooner than have seen Miss Somerville look at me with fear and sus-

picion; and to feel, too, that I had deserved it—to know that I had forfeited every claim to her confidence; and yet, heaven knows, my heart knows, the wretchedness, the misery that made me consent to——but it is of no use to recal that horrible transaction."

"No, no," observed Mr. Dormer, "we will say no more of that—think no more of it—nor must we think of your coming back into my house; that will not do—will not do at all!" he repeated, significantly; "but something shall be done for you—something better suited to your inclinations and capacity. You have abilities, young man, and I will yet believe that you have also feelings and principles that would not disgrace any station; and I shall live, I trust, to hear you yet acknowledge that as a blessing, which you have rightly considered a curse to you! Let me speak a word with you!" And he led him out of the room.

"This is a pretty lesson for us," observed St. George, looking at Charles; "as for Mr. Montgomery, he, of course, is not included in the class of Mr. Dormer's pupils—I hope, however, that the old gentleman will not think I was the voluntary companion of a housebreaker."

"I fear you are often the companion of those whose principles and feelings would bear no comparison with those of this housebreaker," observed Denzil, who felt displeased at the tone of levity which St. George assumed.

Mr. Dormer re-entered——"Your friend is gone, sir," he laconically observed, looking at St. George.

"Which is as much as to say that my company can be dispensed with, sir," replied the latter, starting up and speaking with his usual calmness of manner. "I

hope, however, before I take my leave, that you will allow me to say that I was totally ignorant, until now, of the character of the person you are pleased to designate *my friend.* That I became casually acquainted with him at a house to which we both resorted; and that his frequent mention of a name so well known and respected as Mr. Dormer's, added to his specious manners and appearance, had prevented my entertaining the slightest suspicion that he was other than he pretended to be."

"And, in return for my listening to this vindication of yourself, in which I can, of course, have no interest, will you allow me, sir, to ask you one question?"

"Certainly, sir," replied St. George, evidently disconcerted at the cool sarcastic tone which Mr. Dormer assumed.

"Well, then, I would ask you, on your honour, what is the character of the house to which you both resorted, and for what purpose did you go thither?"

St. George's usually intrepid face was dyed the deepest scarlet.

"As to the character of the house—I only know it as a house where gentlemen *resort* to amuse themselves; and, as to my motives in *resorting* thither, I can only say, that they were the same as those of others—*pour passer le tems.*"

"Thank you, sir, thank you—I am perfectly satisfied, perfectly so," said Mr. Dormer, in the same cool, cutting manner. "You have answered that question, and I have no more to ask."

"Which is as much as to say I may now depart," observed St. George. "However, I have one, and only one more observation to make; and that is, that, how-

ever I may be inclined to concede to Mr. Dormer the privilege of making whatever observations he pleases respecting my character—however I may feel that his age protects him from any resentment I might feel—yet I shall not be equally indulgent, should persons, whom I may consider my equals, be inclined to take the same liberty."

"You need not fear, sir," observed Mr. Dormer, "I can answer for it there are none here, who will feel themselves on sufficiently equal terms with you, to take any of the liberties you would deprecate."

St. George was about to reply, but Mr. Dormer having turned to Charles, as if he considered the matter now entirely at rest between him and the former, so completely disconcerted him, that, without uttering a word to any one, he made his usual familiar nod to Denzil, and quitted the room.

"Signor Huffcap is gone, then?" said Mr. Dormer, looking round. "I am glad of it, for I began to think that, notwithstanding all his professions of consideration for my age, I should stand a fair chance of getting thrashed, if he stayed much longer; but, now, what will you think of the honour of this gentleman, when I tell you that the young man, who has just quitted us, acknowledged to me that this same Mr. St. George possesses no other means of living than are derived from the gaming table; in other words, that he is a professed sharper. I speak this to you in confidence," he continued, "for in confidence it was entrusted to me; and it was for your sakes only, my young friends, that I drew from that poor lad the truth of my suspicions. And now, Charles, to you especially I address myself, because I consider Denzil's disposition is a sufficient protection; but you—

I do entreat, implore, by every tie that is sacred, for your own sake, and for the sake of those who are or ought to be dear to you, that you will solemnly resolve to relinquish all connexions, not only with St. George, but with all of the same stamp and coinage, with whom you have unfortunately become entangled."

"I will, my dear sir, I will!" said Charles, with fervour. "I do indeed feel that I have acted very shamefully; and, though I have but a faint recollection of what occurred last night, yet I know I was in the wrong, and that I ought to ask Denzil's forgiveness, and——"

"Do not say another word," observed Denzil, with friendly warmth, "I, too, was to blame—and if you will only say that all you laid to my charge, was the result of the malice of the moment, and that you do not think me the base——"

"Good Heavens, Denzil, what *could* I lay to your charge?—you, who have been the noblest, most disinterested being that ever lived!" exclaimed Charles. "No, it was only yesterday that I was vindicating you from an accusation, that——" he paused, as if recollecting that he was betraying too much, and Denzil immediately rejoined,

"Tell me but one thing, Charles, and I shall be satisfied—tell me, was it not Julia, to whom you found it necessary to vindicate me?"

"I acknowledge it was," replied Charles.

"That is sufficient," said Denzil, "for it proves to me that what you uttered was not the suggestion of your own heart, but the dictates of another; one whose own bad imagination I know to be quite equal to such an invention."

"I know it all, now—I remember all," observed Charles. "Forgive me, Denzil—it was not, indeed, my

heart that spoke, but the bad passions which the liquor I had drunk, had raised there."

Denzil shook the hand heartily which he held out to him, and, ashamed of the weakness which unmanned him, rushed out of the room.

It was nearly an hour before he returned; and when he did so, he found Mr. Dormer and Charles still in earnest conversation. The burning blush of shame was still lingering on the cheek of Charles, and Mr. Dormer's serious and troubled countenance betrayed that he had met with much to vex and distress him, in the disclosures which the former had been making.

The paper, on which he had been making calculations, was lying before him, and when Denzil approached the table, he put it into his hand.

"It is a decent sum total," he observed, placing his finger on the figures at the bottom.

Montgomery started, and Mr. Dormer, smiling, added,

"I think our good friend, Levison, would start worse than you, Mr. Montgomery, were he to see this. But we must contrive to reduce it within a more moderate compass, before it reaches him. I have been telling Charles, that, as my godson, I intended to leave him a thousand pounds at my death; and I must therefore contrive to pay him half down now, and take upon me to pay the other half when I return to England, which will be in about six months. That will take off a thousand, and leave his uncle seventeen hundred to pay, if Emma's mother refuses, which I do not think she will, upon my representation, to take her share of the burthen."

Montgomery looked at Charles.

"I know it is too generous—too good!" observed the

latter. "I know it is more than I deserve, but if my future good conduct——"

"We will not require any promises, Charles," observed Mr. Dormer; "if your own heart does not prompt you to act so as to repay your friends for the sacrifices they are willing to make, no promises I am sure can bind you. And now there remains nothing but to execute what we have decided upon——I cannot doubt that you will anxiously forward the arrangements I propose—but that cannot be done by your remaining here; and it will therefore be necessary that you return, as speedily as possible, to London. My letter will prepare your uncle to receive you, and spare you all painful explanation. Of his concurrence in what I propose, I entertain not the slightest doubt—neither can you, I am sure—knowing him, as you do. I would therefore advise you to lose no time, but return as quickly as possible."

"I will go to-day, sir, if you wish it," said Charles, but with an air of embarrassment, and in a tone that, to Denzil's ear, conveyed little of sincerity, and rendered the latter more than ever anxious that he should delay no time in following Mr. Dormer's directions.

"I do not know that there is any necessity for going to-day," returned Mr. Dormer; "but, as I have said before, I would not have you delay; and, as you have nothing that need detain you here——I dare not ask you to dine with me to-day, for Rosa and her aunt are both so vexed with you, on Emma's account; but I will see you this evening, and give you the necessary documents, and to-morrow morning——"

"To-morrow morning, sir, I shall obey your directions, and quit France," replied Charles.

"Obey your own wishes, I should hope," returned Mr. Dormer, looking earnestly at him.

"Certainly, sir," replied Charles, bowing to conceal his confusion.

Mr. Dormer departed, and Charles, after taking several turns across the room, observed, without looking at Denzil.

"It is devilishly provoking that one should be driven back to London, before one has had time to see any thing of Paris; and at this season of the year, too, when every soul that one cares about is out of town. I would as soon be sent to Siberia, as be forced to stay in London, when the season is over!"

"But your uncle and aunt, and——and Fanny, they are there," said Denzil, with difficulty articulating the name which he could never hear or pronounce without emotion.

"Pshaw! who could bear such a hum-drum set as they associate with?" replied Charles.

"They will be somewhat gayer, I should expect, now, than you imagine," returned Denzil, striving to speak with calmness. "Fanny is about to marry."

"Marry!" repeated Charles, with astonishment. "Fanny married, and not to you? It cannot be truth—I will never believe it!"

"I have Mr. Dormer's word for it," said Denzil, turning to conceal the emotion which Charles's observation had excited.

"Then I can only say there is neither faith nor truth in womankind!" exclaimed Charles. "But who, or what can the man be, who has supplanted you in her affections?"

Denzil repeated what he had learned from Mr. Dormer, and Charles, with more of warmth and interest

than he usually displayed, where he was not personally concerned, observed—

"I do not know, Denzil, what may have happened to change Fanny's opinion of you—but nothing can persuade me that the poor girl has, of her own free will, so soon consented to become the wife of another—even though he has rank and title to recommend him. But I shall soon see her, and I will know the truth!"

Denzil sighed as he observed that it was now, probably, too late.

"Yet I acknowledge," he added, "that it would give me great satisfaction to know that, whatever may be the motives which have influenced Fanny and her father to act as they have done, they should not attribute to me any change in those sentiments which I have and ever shall retain towards Fanny. Heaven is my witness!" he continued, with great emotion, "that by no one act of my life have I deserved to forfeit the regard with which I was beheld by them; and the only act of injustice which I can attribute to my respected friend, your uncle, is his denying me the opportunity of vindicating myself from the false, and, I fear, malicious charges which must have been brought against me. The time may come when all may be cleared up—but, as I have said before, it will be too late."

"You think, then, that some one has aspersed you to my uncle?" said Charles.

"I am sure of it," returned Denzil.

Charles remained lost apparently in deep thought for some minutes.

"I think I read it all now, Denzil," he observed, "but I should like to be certain:—will you," he con-

tinued, "trust my prudence so far as to agree to my keeping the appointment I made with Julia to-night?—And yet I cannot," he continued, putting his hand to his bandaged eye, "though I should have liked to have ascertained whether my suspicions were correct—and I know I could have done it, by pretending to fall into the opinion she entertains towards you."

"Then you think that she has been my secret enemy?" observed Denzil.

"I do, indeed—and as I feel I owe you some recompence for my conduct last night, I would willingly have lent my aid to discover whether my suspicions were correct, to the full extent; but, however, I shall know when I see Fanny. And by the by, Denzil, why cannot you as well go with me at once, and clear yourself? I will not believe, even now, that my uncle would act otherwise than justly and honourably; and, if he were convinced that you have been wronged, I do firmly believe——"

"I dare not indulge the hopes you would raise in my bosom," interrupted Denzil. "Oh, no—too surely she is now lost to me for ever!"

"We shall see—we shall see," returned Charles; "of this, however, be assured, Denzil, that my best offices shall be yours. I owe you, as I said before, some recompence for the injury my frantic folly committed, and I will not be sparing in my endeavours to set all once more right, if it is possible. But now, tell me, candidly, what is it that prevents you from at once accompanying me to London, and pleading your own cause with my cousin?"

"I cannot leave my mother," replied Denzil, "and she is in too weak a state to bear the journey. Heaven

knows whether she will ever be able to take it—but I dare not leave her."

"And you really have a mother living—one whom you can acknowledge, and to whom you are attached?" said Charles. "It is strange! nay, forgive me, Denzil, I do not mean to offend you—but I have heard strange tales."

"Will you allow me to repeat to you a stranger tale than any you have yet heard, and of which she is the heroine?" said Denzil.

Charles assented, and Denzil proceeded to relate the circumstances which had revealed to him the existence and situation of his mother, from the time of his first meeting with her and Tyrrell in London.

CHAPTER XXIV.

How could you say my face was fair,
And yet that face forsake?
How could you win my virgin heart,
Yet leave that heart to break?
How could you promise love to me,
And not that promise keep?
Why did you swear my eyes were bright,
Yet leave those eyes to weep?—MALLETT.

WE must now return to the period which had given not less acute pain and lasting sorrow to Fanny Levison, than to her lover—the period when they had parted, as each supposed, for ever.

On that memorable evening, Denzil had not long left

the hotel, when a servant entered to say that an English lady, who declined to give her name, requested to see Miss Levison, on important business.

Surprised at the message, Fanny hesitated, and her father at that moment entering the room, she requested his advice.

"Let your aunt see her, my dear," was his reply. "It is most probably some lady's maid who has been turned off, and don't know how to get home; or, perhaps, a worse character, who thinks to relieve you of a little money—there are a thousand such tricks played every day in this capital—therefore you had better let your aunt see her. She will not be so easily imposed on as you."

Miss Rachel looked highly delighted at this unusual compliment; and, assuming a look of consequence and sagacity, which brought a smile on Fanny's lovely countenance, she quitted the room.

In about five minutes she returned, evidently much discomposed.

"I know not what to think," she observed; "the person whom I have just left in the other room, is a beautiful young lady, who appears to be suffering great distress of mind; and, from what she has said, it originates with Denzil Montgomery; but she refuses fully to explain herself, unless it is to Fanny."

Fanny turned pale.

"To me?" she exclaimed. "How can I be concerned? Denzil——it cannot be that Denzil! What can she have to say to me, and how can Denzil be concerned?"

"I know not what to think, my dear," observed Mr.

Levison. "Are you sure, sister, that she is a proper person for my daughter to speak to?"

"I can only judge from appearances, and those you know, brother, are very deceitful sometimes."

"But what do they lead you to conclude in this instance?" demanded Mr. Levison, impatiently.

"Then I will tell you at once, brother, that I should, for my own part, think the lady is what she represents herself—a person of respectable character and connexions, the daughter of a gentleman——"

"That is enough!" interrupted Mr. Levison, "it would be the height of injustice to refuse to hear what she has to say. But there is one stipulation I must make, Fanny; and that is, that if she has aught to allege against Montgomery—I do not, I cannot believe that he would act basely—I hope I am not deceived!—but what I would say is, there must be no concealment on your part—I must be allowed to judge, as well as you, of his conduct. Young girls are, I know, but too apt to come to very hasty conclusions, and——"

"My dear sir, I will have no concealments from you," interrupted Fanny, hastily; "but it cannot—it surely cannot be——"

"Go, my dear child," said Mr. Levison. "Do not agitate yourself in this manner—It is better that you should know the worst, than suffer this suspense."

Fanny was indeed dreadfully agitated—the strange conduct of Montgomery, his frequent fits of melancholy, the struggle which she had so frequently seen between his love for her, and some hidden motive which induced him to restrain it. All, in short, that had appeared mysterious and inexplicable in his conduct, rushed into her

mind, and, trembling with forebodings of evil, she entered the room where her strange visitor was seated.

A female, young and handsome, as Miss Rachel had described her, clothed in deep mourning, arose from her seat at her entrance, and, in a low, faltering voice, said——

"I know not how to thank you, madam, for this condescension—yet, I entreat you to believe, that it is as much on your account as my own, that I have sought this interview. I, indeed, have little to hope or expect from it—but to you it may be——"

"Forgive me, madam, but I know not how I can be interested," returned Fanny, trying to conceal her emotion; "but I beg you will at once say what your motives are for wishing to see me."

The lady put her handkerchief to her eyes——

"It is a hard thing, madam," she replied, "at once to acknowledge myself unworthy of the favour you have shewn me, but, to comply with your request, I will tell you that I came here to warn you of the perfidy, the cruelty of one whom I have reason to think you now regard with too much favour. It would be too long a tale to relate the means by which I first became acquainted with Mr. Montgomery, and it would be impossible for me to trace the specious arts by which he won my affections, and the confidence of my poor mother. It will be sufficient to tell you that he has requited that confidence by accomplishing my ruin, and sending my mother broken hearted to the grave! But this is not all, madam—I have to accuse him, not only of the most cruel indifference towards me, but I have, within a few days, discovered that, even while he is addressing you, with the intention of

making you his wife, he is the constant companion of a woman of the most abandoned principles and conduct—one to whom he has not only sacrificed me, but will also——"

"Pardon me," exclaimed Fanny, who had scarcely been able to listen so far; "pardon me, if I say that what you relate is to me so incredible, that I can scarcely believe that you are not deceived. It cannot be Mr. Denzil Montgomery, of whom you speak—not the Denzil Montgomery that——"

"Alas, madam, too well I know it is the same person with whom you are acquainted. How often has he spoken of you to me—how often slightingly described one who—but I will not hurt your feelings by repeating what, perhaps, was only said to satisfy my fond and jealous fears; but forgive me, you are pale—fainting, alas! I fear——"

Fanny heard no more, nor was she conscious of what passed, until she found herself supported in the arms of her father; while her aunt and her own maid were busily employed with volatiles and all the usual restoratives, and the strange lady was standing by her, with her handkerchief at her eyes.

"I am ashamed of this weakness," observed the poor girl, bursting into tears; "but it is the last I shall shew—my dear, dear father, I will never, never see his face again!"

"Let me understand all this!" exclaimed Mr. Levison. "Is it Denzil Montgomery of whom you speak?"

"Yes—he is the basest, vilest——but I have done with him for ever! It is the last time I will ever mention his name!"

"Do not be rash, Fanny—do not judge too hastily—

young men will be young men," said Mr. Levison, "and, though I would be the last to vindicate Denzil, if he has been deliberately false and treacherous——"

"I can prove him both, sir," said the lady, interrupting him. "I can prove that, even at this moment, while his conduct is drawing these bitter tears from me, and occasioning scarcely less distress to your amiable daughter, he is passing his hours in the society of one of the most abandoned of her sex. I appeal to his servant Jacques, whether he does not regularly visit, and maintain in luxury, the woman of whom I speak. Alas! it was from Jacques I first learned the cause that estranged him from me; and learned, too, that the female, to whom his every hour of leisure is devoted, is not less notorious than she is artful and dangerous."

"Let Jacques be called," said Mr Levison; "if this is truth, I——"

Jacques came, and, with seeming reluctance, confessed that he was in the habit of frequently attending his master to the lodgings of a woman, whom he knew to have been one of the most depraved courtesans of Paris; nay, more, that he knew Mr. Montgomery was then with her; and he could, if Mr. Levison pleased, conduct him thither.

"No, no, I want no further proof!" exclaimed the old gentleman, with vehemence; "Fanny, my dear, retire with your aunt to your room—I will come to you presently—this young lady and I must have some conversation, and then I will join you."

Wretched, and glad to escape again hearing the tale which seemed to have withered up her heart, Fanny obeyed his directions, and Mr. Levison's questions then

elicited from the lady a recapitulation of the same tale of Montgomery's villany, that had before harrowed up his daughter's feelings, with the addition that her seducer had left her to suffer all the pangs of penury, as well as those inflicted by her consciousness of disgrace.

Mr. Levison's heart was ever accessible to a tale of woe, and the lady retired well satisfied, in more ways than one, with the success of her feigned tale.

Mr. Levison's first resolution, when he returned to discuss this subject with his daughter, was at once to reveal to Denzil Montgomery all he had learned, and to overwhelm him with the reproaches which he considered the latter had justly deserved. But Fanny had already began to frame excuses for him whom she so ardently loved! There was a want of delicacy, she said, in the manners of the lady; a kind of—she hardly knew what—but she could only designate it as aiming at effect—"a theatrical sort of air, even in her tears;" and, indeed, she saw none shed, though the female, who had without a blush proclaimed herself the mistress of the man she was attempting to ruin, had made abundant display of her white handkerchief. In short, Fanny was very evidently inclined to believe that Denzil was not half so bad as he had been represented, and that her father would be by no means justified in acting as he proposed—namely, dismissing Denzil Montgomery with ignominy from his favour for ever.

"I see how it is," observed Mr. Levison to his sister, when they left the room together, "this foolish girl will be persuaded, if she once listens to him, that he is not half so guilty as he appears to be; and it will finish with his prevailing upon her to forgive him. Now, if I were

really convinced he loved her, there might be a chance (even if he were guilty to the full extent of all that is alleged against him) that she might reclaim him. But I do not believe he does!"

"Love!" repeated Miss Rachel, "what love can he have for her, when even now, at this minute——my blood boils to think of it! how often have I wondered what secret there was on his mind! but it is all out now, and she must be mad if she ever thinks of, or looks at him again!"

"I'm afraid, Rachel, she will do more than that, if we give him an opportunity to plead his own cause," returned Mr. Levison; "the rascal is so specious—so——good heavens! how has he imposed upon me—even me, who am so apt to suspect—who know the world so well. Never, never have I believed Denzil Montgomery capable of a base, a deceitful, or a dishonourable action; yet, if he is guilty even of half that is laid to his charge——"

"If, brother—is it possible that you can raise a doubt?" interrupted Rachel. "Does not his whole conduct confirm it? What else can account for his strange absence, at such an hour, which has so puzzled me? His coolness at times to Fanny, and seeming to dread being left alone with her? His starts, and fears, and tremblings, which made me often think that he was deranged? what were they all, but the effects of a guilty conscience, which made him always dread a discovery? Yes, yes, I see it all plainly now—a base, vile, deceitful, treacherous wretch!"

"Softly, softly, Rachel!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, "this violence will do no good, though I could tread the villain under my feet, for his base perjury and falsehood;

but we must go a wiser way to work with him—we must meet art with art, and prevent his taking advantage of Fanny's weakness and prejudice in his favour."

"I would not give him the opportunity, brother," returned Rachel. "I would never suffer him to see her again; and the best way to prevent it, will be at once to leave this place, and not let him know which way we are gone."

"It is the first time, sister, that I ever heard you give wise advice!" said Mr. Levison. "It is exactly what I was going to suggest—but it must be done directly. We must not give Fanny's resentment time to cool, or him time to circumvent us!"

"Certainly, certainly not," returned Rachel.

"Well, then, lose no time, but go and acquaint Fanny with my determination, and I will keep out of the way until all is ready," said Mr. Levison. "I have promised to do something more for that poor girl that he has ruined, but she has left me no clue to find her out; and, after all, I confess I am, as Fanny says, somewhat doubtful that she is all that she pretended to be. There was a briskness in her manner, and a sparkling in her eyes, when she got hold of the money I gave her, which I could not help thinking was sadly at variance with her pretensions to delicacy and refinement."

"I'm afraid, indeed," observed Rachel, "that she is no better than she should be—but that don't say anything in his favour—a reprobate! However, I won't waste time in talking, but go and acquaint Fanny, and begin at once to pack up. Heaven bless me, I little thought we should——"

"There! there! don't trouble yourself to make a

volume of reflections," said Mr. Levison; "but go at once, and talk as we go along the road;—there will be plenty of time for reflections then."

The plan, which was thus projected between the brother and sister, was successfully put in practice; and the first indication Denzil received of their intentions, was the coolness with which he was received by Mr. Levison, and the subsequent preparations which were made for their hasty departure.

It was with very evident grief and reluctance that Fanny consented to this arrangement; but it was in vain that she represented to her aunt the injustice of thus condemning Denzil unheard. The very anxiety she expressed, to see and reproach him for his baseness and treachery, was sufficient with Miss Rachel, who was rendered wary and suspicious, by her fears for her niece's happiness; and all the persuasions of the latter could not induce her to interfere with her brother to persuade him to remain another hour.

They left Paris, and Mr. Levison's money was liberally bestowed, to secure the secrecy of those who could have given intelligence to Denzil which road they had taken.

For several weeks they continued travelling from place to place, Mr. Levison hoping that the change of scene, and the bustle of the journey, would divert the mind of Fanny from dwelling on her late disappointment; but Fanny had been too long accustomed to place her whole happiness in the society of Denzil, to forget him so soon; and all her father's and aunt's condemnation of him—all that she had herself believed to be true—failed in rousing in her mind that contempt and hatred which they would have wished her to feel and to express.

Wearied with the bustle, the frivolity, and emptiness of the pleasures which they hurried her into, Fanny at length expressed her earnest wish to return home; and her father, attentive to her slightest request, so that it did not relate to him whom he was anxious she should altogether forget, instantly consented to turn his face towards England.

"I should have liked, too, to have visited Lausanne, before I bade adieu for ever to Switzerland," he observed to his sister. "I should have liked my Fanny to have seen, with me, the grave of her mother, and have retraced the paths which her infant feet so often trod—but it would, perhaps, only have increased her melancholy."

"Nay, dearest papa," observed Fanny, who had entered unperceived, and heard his remark, "do not let that idea prevent your indulging your wishes. Be assured, that nothing could gratify me more than visiting the spot you mention—but I thought, by the route you seemed to have adopted, that you intended to avoid Lausanne, as reviving, in your own mind, melancholy thoughts and recollections; and therefore I did not venture to suggest that which has nevertheless constantly been present to my thoughts. Oh, no, dear father, far from increasing those feelings which give you uneasiness, believe me, nothing can be more likely to soothe this unquiet heart to rest, and teach me to bear with fortitude the trifling, comparatively trifling ills which have fallen to my lot."

"To Lausanne, then, we will go, my dear child," said Mr. Levison, with great emotion; "and from thence, if it should remain your wish, we will return to England."

The house which Mr. Levison had, on his former visit, resided in, near Lausanne, was now, to his no small dis-

appointment, occupied by an English nobleman; and Mr. Levison was thus deprived of the satisfaction he had anticipated of inhabiting, if but for a few days, the scene which had been hallowed by the presence of the only woman he had ever loved, and whose image still dwelt as freshly on his memory, as when he had last beheld her there.

The Earl of Raeburn, the nobleman who was now its temporary inhabitant, was, they were told, in delicate health, and of very secluded habits, associating with none of his countrymen, of whom there were a number resident in the town and its vicinity. A bribe to the gardener, however, procured Mr. Levison free access to the grounds, which remained nearly in the same state as when they had left them.

Here, at an hour when they were taught to consider themselves safe from being interrupted by the presence of the master of the mansion, Fanny and her father wandered through the well-known paths, recalling the sportive hours of childhood, which seemed all at once to rush on the remembrance of the former; and not unfrequently shedding a tear, as they spoke of those who then gave promise of qualities, which their subsequent conduct had not realised.

"Yes," observed Mr. Levison, "little did I then think, as I used to sit under that tree, and watch the boys at their sports, and fancy I traced in their actions the germs of all those qualities with which I wished them to be endowed—how little did I then think, I say, that both would deceive me? And yet, I acknowledge that I have sometimes feared that Charles would prove what he is—selfish, headstrong, and extravagant; but Denzil—oh, never, never! He was the noblest, the most sensitive, the finest-spirited boy!

Drawn by S. Gotwald. Engraved by S. Bolle.

Fanny Levison.

Wandering amid the romantic scenes in Switzerland & lamenting her estrangement from Denzel.

London, Tilley & Co. 2 Northampton Square.

Good heavens, how has the world altered him, or was it possible that even then I was deceived? Oh, no, it could not be—but I will not think of what he was—I will remember only what he is, and hate, despise, detest him, as I ought."

To all this, Fanny could offer no reply; her sense of justice told her that all her father could say of Denzil was not too harsh—yet her heart refused to join in his condemnation. She could remember him only as her father had described him to have been in his childhood, and as he had ever appeared to her—the noblest, most exalted of human beings; and, though she felt it impossible not to believe that he had given some cause for the assertions which had ruined him in her father's estimation, she still could not help secretly believing that his errors had been greatly exaggerated, and that the time would yet come, when he would be able to prove that he had been far less guilty than he had been represented. On one point only, Fanny despaired—that he loved her, as she once believed he did, she no longer dared to hope!

"Oh, no," she mentally exclaimed, "had he loved me, as I have loved him, he could never have afforded room for the exaggerated representations which have been made of his conduct. To me, therefore, he is lost for ever! But, for his own sake, I hope the hour will arrive when he will be able successfully to vindicate himself from the black charges that have been brought against him!"

It was on the second visit that they made to their former haunts, that they unexpectedly encountered a gentleman, whose superior and commanding air, and the

look of surprise, though of courtesy, with which he regarded them, at once revealed him to be the present owner of the scenes which they had at that moment forgotten they were now trespassing upon.

Unwilling, apparently, to disturb their enjoyment, he passed on, after returning Mr. Levison's salutation, and looking rather earnestly at Fanny, whose blushing countenance betrayed her confusion at thus appearing an intruder—when Mr. Levison, suddenly recollecting himself, observed,

"I am almost sure—and yet I do not know—it is so many years since we met—yet I think I cannot be mistaken. Stop, Fanny, while I follow and speak to him."

Without waiting her reply, he quickened his pace after the stranger, and in another minute Fanny beheld their mutual and hearty congratulations, and felt all her confusion at the impropriety of their situation vanish, as she heard the stranger express his satisfaction at having so opportunely met one whom he had long wished to see.

"And little did I think," observed Mr. Levison, "when I stole into these grounds, to gratify my daughter, by treading with her the paths 'o'er which her infant feet had strayed,' as the poet has it, that the person whom I wished to avoid was of all others him I should have been desirous to see; and that the title of Earl Raeburn concealed a friend whom I have long known, and for whom I have always entertained the highest esteem."

"And this young lady is your daughter?" said Earl Raeburn. "Happy Levison! You have a wife and daughter—a son, too, perhaps——"

"Nay, nay, you are overrating my comforts," interrupted Mr. Levison; "this is all my family—in her, all my future hopes and honours are centered. That spire, which you see towering above those trees, marks the spot where ——but we will not now speak of subjects which can only make us melancholy. You are, I suppose by your observation, still unmarried?"

A deep shade of gloom passed over the fine expressive countenance of Earl Raeburn, as he replied in the affirmative; and a long silence succeeded, during which Mr. Levison and his lordship appeared lost in deep thought.

"You will come in and breakfast with me?" observed the latter. "Miss Levison will excuse all deficiencies in a bachelor's household, who never entertains company."

"I fear, then, my lord, we shall be troublesome guests; yet I acknowledge I have so strong a wish to enter once more our former habitation, that I should be tempted, with papa's leave——"

"Oh, I shall not refuse the invitation, my dear, you may depend upon it," interrupted Mr. Levison; "and so you may go on, if you please, and order more cups and saucers, and whatever you like to fill them—Fanny and I will follow you."

"I do not know anything that could have given me more pleasure than meeting with my old friend," observed Mr. Levison. "Time has dealt leniently with him, for he still looks a young man, while I——but, to be sure, he is many years younger than I am. Oh, yes, he cannot now be more than forty-five—for he was but a lad to me, when last I saw him."

"He looks, too, as if he had experienced care and suffering," observed Fanny, who felt greatly interested by

the mild and intelligent countenance of her father's friend.

"Yes, I have heard that he met with some peculiar misfortunes in the early part of his life, after I lost sight of him," returned Mr. Levison; "but my own cares and troubles have banished from my mind the more particular recollection of what they were, and I have only a general impression that I felt very sorry for him. It appears, however, that, in the main point, he has been lucky; for I know the title he bears was accompanied by a very large estate."

They entered the house, and Earl Raeburn welcomed them with every mark of satisfaction.

"You have made some alterations here, I perceive," said Mr. Levison; "yes, there it was her harpsichord used to stand, and you have made a window there—it may be an improvement to you—but it is not to me," he added, with a sigh.

"Do not blame me, Charles, for what I have nothing to do with," replied the Earl; "the house is exactly as I found it—but you speak as if I had been the tenant here, ever since you left it; whereas I have only been here a few months, and should have before this time quitted it, but that illness has somewhat tamed the restless spirit which has, for the last three or four years, made me an unsettled wanderer, seeking peace and finding none!"

A tear started in Fanny's dove-like eyes, at the tone of melancholy in which this was uttered. There was a something, too, in the voice and look, which recalled to her memory those whom it was the business of her life now to forget. Yet, though she tried to think that this resemblance was far from being a recommendation to her,

and that she should have liked Earl Raeburn better, had he been less like Denzil, she in reality found, in that very circumstance, the greatest source of attraction; and while she secretly gazed on, and listened to the Earl, thought only of him whom he so strongly resembled.

The hour of breakfast passed swiftly and delightfully. The melancholy impressions which Mr. Levison at first felt, on reviewing the scene of his former happiness, gradually yielded to the more cheerful feelings inspired by the reminiscences of the gay hours which Earl Raeburn and himself had passed together; and the former seemed to live over again the time when, as he boastingly observed, he was the merriest even of those whose only business was mirth.

"But have you nothing to tell me, my lord, of what has happened to yourself, since last I beheld you? Of your public life, I know enough—for your name has not been buried in obscurity. It has graced many a column in the newspapers—but, though I have known the life of the hero, I have heard nothing of the adventures of the friend. Tell me, how comes it that I find you still a forlorn bachelor?—you, who were used to preach me such goodly sermons, and hold me such lectures on love—you, who were always, even in the midst of all our revelry, maintaining the superiority of a married life, and quoting from Thomson that well-known passage—

> 'Oh, happy they, the happiest of their kind,
> 'Whom gentler stars unite, &c. &c.'

Have you forgotten it all now, eh, Fred?"

"No," returned the Earl, smiling, while he suppressed a sigh. "Nor have I ever found reason to alter my sen-

timents, though circumstances have intervened to prevent my realising the picture which has so often drawn the raillery of my gay companions on me."

There was a tenderness and solemnity in the tone in which the Earl uttered this reply, that convinced Fanny of what she had before suspected; namely, that his lordship had suffered some severe disappointment; and the thought gave additional interest to him in her eyes, who was herself lamenting the wreck of all her hopes.

The eyes of the Earl seemed to read her thoughts, and as if ashamed of the weakness he was conscious he had betrayed, he added, in a gayer tone—

"But I wonder, Levison, you should feel any surprise at my remaining a bachelor. Do you not know that, 'till now some nine moons wasted,' my life has been passed in 'the tented field;' and therefore 'little of this great world' do I know, 'more than pertains to feats of broil and battle?' I have had no opportunities of whispering tales of love in ladies' ears—and now, I fear, it is too late!"

"Pshaw! a soldier and afraid?" said Mr. Levison, gaily. "No, no—if such are still your sentiments, Fred, I shall yet see you a married man—the happy father of a family. You are yet but in the prime of life—you must have a heir to your title, and—what the deuce is the matter with him?" he added, as the Earl, without answering, suddenly darted through the door which opened into the garden, and disappeared behind the thickest cluster of shrubs with which it was shaded.

"Your friend, papa, has, I suspect, recently met with some disappointment of the heart—you must be careful not again to start the subject which has so discomposed him."

Mr. Levison looked surprised——"Poor Fred," he observed, "I did not suspect he was still so sensitive. I know that, when a young man, he was the most romantic fellow that ever existed—a complete knight-errant in the service and defence of the ladies, and entertaining the most chimerical ideas respecting them; but I should have thought the world would have taught him better. However, I shall be careful for the future how I touch on this tender subject, though I shall not rest till I have learned what this mighty secret is."

The Earl returned, alleging, as an excuse for his abrupt departure, a nervous complaint, the consequence of excessive toil, and a residence for many years in a hot climate; and, in a few minutes, Mr. Levison having first engaged his lordship to dine *en famille*, bade him adieu.

From this period Earl Raeburn and the family of Mr. Levison became inseparable. Regarding his lordship only as the friend of her father, Fanny soon learned to dismiss all constraint and reserve in his presence. He was the constant companion of her walks; the gout, Mr. Levison's old enemy, having, a few days after their first meeting with his lordship, seized on the former with more than its usual virulence, and rendered him, most reluctantly, a prisoner to his room. Under the directions of the Earl, those studies which Fanny had disregarded and thrown aside, were again resumed. He pointed out to her the most picturesque scenes for her pencil, and not unfrequently improved her sketches of Nature by the masterly touches of his own hand. His rich deep bass voice accompanied hers, and his taste and science selected her music. He read to her, talked with her—and, in short, was never absent from her side.

"I wish he were but ten years younger," Mr. Levison would observe to his sister, as he gazed upon them.

"Dear me, I am sure he looks but a young man yet, brother—there are many thousands much more unequal matches than theirs would be; and if we could only get Denzil Montgomery out of her head,—I am sure his lordship doats upon her! And you see how well and hearty he is getting—there is no talk now of his nervous complaints—he is all gaiety and good spirits!"

"No great proof of his being in love that, Rachel," observed Mr. Levison, smiling, "especially, when he must be very doubtful of success—for he can hardly expect that a girl with such recommendations as our Fanny possesses, would easily be won to listen to his suit."

Rachel, however, could not be brought to think precisely as her brother did, on this subject. In her estimation, the Earl was a match so desirable, that she could not believe her niece would, if her heart were free from all prepossession in favour of another, hesitate a moment to accept of him, were he to make her an offer; and most heartily did she wish that the name of Denzil Montgomery was erased from Fanny's memory.

Conscious, however, that should Fanny, in her present state of mind, suspect that such an idea was indulged by her friends, it would have the immediate effect of checking that confidence and free intercourse which was likely, in Rachel's mind, to lead to the desired result, the cautious spinster avoided, even by a hint, leading her niece to suppose that such an event had ever entered *her* imagination as that it was possible for Earl Raeburn to be in love with her, while, at the same time, she was

herself incessantly on the watch to detect, in his words and actions, some proofs of that passion.

One circumstance seemed highly favourable to the hopes and views which she indulged—Fanny no longer expressed any impatience to return to England; on the contrary, she appeared perfectly satisfied with their present residence; and, it was very evident, seemed to consider it advisable that they should prolong their stay until the period which the Earl had, from their first meeting, fixed for *his* return. In fact, Fanny had begun, she thought, to feel that the society of the Earl was necessary to her happiness, and with that feeling Rachel anticipated that all that she wished would be sure to follow.

Nearly three months, however, passed without Rachel's seeming any nearer to the completion of her wishes; and she began almost to fear that she had been too sanguine, and that the Earl, instead of being, as she hoped and believed, an impassioned lover, was only what he appeared to wish to be thought—a friend, whose years protected him from any suspicion of indulging a warmer passion, when an event occurred, which aroused, or rather confirmed all her hopes of seeing her niece in possession of the fortune and title which it was in the power of the Earl of Raeburn to bestow.

To gratify Fanny's passion for the beautiful and sublime scenes afforded by the lake, on the borders of which their residence was situated, the Earl had engaged a boat to be constantly in attendance, and for hours they glided together over the smooth waters, sometimes enjoying only the luxury of their own thoughts, but oftener engaged in animated conversation. Frequently had the day closed over them, and the bright clear moon risen to

point their homeward way, while Fanny had lost all remembrance of time, in listening to the glowing and pictorial descriptions which her companion would give her of the scene, the manners, and the habits of life which he had witnessed, during his long sojourn in eastern climes. Of his own eventful life, too, he had so much to tell her—like Othello, he could speak

> "—— Of most disastrous chances,
> Of moving accidents, by flood and field;
> Of hair-breadth scapes i' th' imminent deadly breach;
> Of being taken by the insolent foe—"

Of all, in short, that make up the animated and moving panorama of a soldier's life.

It was on one of these occasions that they were warned by their boatmen that it was necessary that they should make their way to land as speedily as possible, there being certain indications of a gathering storm.

To neither her or the Earl did there seem to be any apparent necessity for shortening their pleasurable excursion, but they yielded nevertheless to the prudent suggestion of their attendants, and were already within sight of the dark grove which embosomed their residence, when one of those sudden gusts, which are so peculiar to the navigation of lakes, at once descended upon them with resistless fury—in an instant their little bark was upset, and they were all precipitated into the water.

For some moments Earl Raeburn buffeted with the now foaming and swelling waves, and succeeded in getting hold of a spar, which enabled him to keep above water, when he discovered the lifeless form of Fanny, still buoyed up by her clothes, but at a considerable distance.

"Make for the shore, my lord, or you are lost!" exclaimed one of the boatmen, who had just succeeded in laying hold of the same spar which supported his lordship.

"The lady!" exclaimed the Earl, in a tone of frantic agony—"I must save her, or perish!"

"Then you will perish—for it will be impossible for you to reach the land with her!" exclaimed the man, redoubling his own efforts to swim towards the land.

Earl Raeburn, however, saw only Fanny—thought only of Fanny—and in another minute he caught hold of her dress, at the very critical minute in which she was sinking.

It was in vain, however, that he attempted, thus encumbered, to make any way towards the wished-for land, yet still he would not quit his grasp. Another awful minute passed—he felt his strength fast failing—but he still released not his hold, though now utterly hopeless of relief. He cast his eyes over the now again smooth waters—but all was still and silent. His former companions, the boatmen, had disappeared; he knew not whether they had perished, or whether they had been enabled to reach the land, which, though not far distant, seemed to recede from his dim sight, as he strained his anxious eyes towards it. Another moment and all was over—he uttered a fervent prayer, and the waters passed over his head.

Of all that passed after the first fearful shock, Fanny had but a faint recollection, when, nearly an hour afterwards, she once more awoke to life, and beheld her aunt and several other females occupied about her, with the most anxious solicitude.

"My father! where am I? Earl Raeburn, is he safe? How was I brought here?" she demanded.

"You shall see your father in a short time, my child, my dear child!" replied Rachel—"make yourself easy, dear Fanny, you are in your own—in Earl Raeburn's chamber, I should say—and he is safe, as well as you! you are both saved—miraculously saved! Oh, my child, next to Heaven, we have to thank his lordship for your preservation! To the last moment he supported you from sinking, and, even when at last he lost all consciousness, he never quitted you, and you were taken into the boat which went to your assistance, firmly clasped in his arms. Oh, may every blessing that can be showered on man, be his portion!"

Fanny's heart re-echoed the grateful prayer—but she was too faint and weak to speak; and when her father, (whom one of the female servants had summoned to the chamber to witness his daughter's perfect restoration,) knelt by her bedside, and breathed his fervent blessings on her head and that of her preserver, her silent tears alone evinced the feelings which swelled her bosom.

It was many days before Fanny and the Earl met, for both severely felt the effects of the accident which had so nearly been fatal to them; but when they at length recovered sufficiently to resume their usual habits, Rachel beheld with delight symptoms which she considered sufficiently decisive that her most sanguine hopes would eventually be realised. Earl Raeburn's manners were no longer those of the sober, cool, and unimpassioned friend. He gazed upon Fanny, as upon one whom he had acquired a right to call his own, and for whose future welfare and happiness he was become accountable. Not a word, not

a wish could she utter, which it was not his instant care to realise. Her absence, even for a few minutes, seemed to deprive him of every enjoyment, and he watched over her with a solicitude as tender as that with which a mother would watch over the child whom death has threatened to tear from her fond embrace.

The painful and for some time dangerous illness of Mr. Levison, which resulted from the shock he had received, drew still closer the tie which bound Earl Raeburn to the beautiful and amiable being, with whom he shared the cares and anxieties of soothing and amusing the sick bed of the peevish and impatient invalid; but it was not until Mr. Levison was fast recovering, that the explanation, which the latter now desired almost as ardently as his more sanguine sister, took place as to Earl Raeburn's views towards Fanny.

"I am conscious, my dear friend," observed his lordship, after acknowledging to Mr. Levison that his happiness depended on Fanny's accepting his proposals of marriage, "I am fully conscious that it appears like vanity and presumption in me, to hope that she can feel towards me any sentiments but the cold ones of esteem and friendship; yet I do think my warm and devoted affection, my constant attention to her happiness, and the unbounded control which she will possess over me and my fortunes, will secure her happiness, perhaps more effectually than if she were united to one who possesses all the advantages of which I am deficient; and, if I have your consent to address her——"

"You shall have not only my consent, but my warmest wishes and influence," interrupted Mr. Levison; "and, though I cannot ensure you success, I flatter myself my wishes will go some way towards it."

A few hours after this conversation, Mr. Levison, in pursuance of his promise to Earl Raeburn, seized an opportunity of communicating to his daughter the proposal of his lordship.

Fanny listened to her father with emotions of surprise and embarrassment which evinced the sincerity of her declaration, that such a thought as that the Earl viewed her with any warmer feeling than esteem, had never entered her mind.

"I am sorry, very sorry," she continued, while an ingenuous blush suffused her cheek, "that I am undeceived —for I have been so happy, so confiding in his kindness and friendship—I have felt so at ease in his society——"

"And why should you now feel otherwise, Fanny?" demanded her father, rather impatiently, "surely, the consciousness of being beloved by one who has passed the heyday and folly of youth, need not shake your confidence in him, or banish the feelings of esteem and friendship."

"But my dear father cannot expect," said Fanny, casting down her eyes in confusion, "that I can seriously encourage any——"

"I will tell you at once, Fanny," interrupted Mr. Levison, "that I do expect you will act like a sensible, rational girl; and not, from romantic and ridiculous notions, throw away the certainty of happiness, when it is in your power to secure it. You will recollect, Fanny, that I once sacrificed to your wishes all my own feelings and prejudices—if they were prejudices. I consented to your forming a connexion with one who, whether by birth or fortune——"

"Do not—oh, pray do not speak on that mortifying subject, dear sir," exclaimed Fanny. "I have been sufficiently punished for my folly!"

"I do not wish to mortify you, my child," returned Mr. Levison; "all I would say is, that my having yielded to you, on so important a point, contrary to my own conviction, gives me a right to expect that you will not rashly oppose my wishes now, and sacrifice to a shadow the happiness of my remaining years and your own life. I do not wish you now to answer me, Fanny, nor does Earl Raeburn expect you instantly to accept his offer—but I do hope that you will not madly and blindly reject him. Fanny, you must be aware that every day that passes is hurrying me with rapid footsteps to the grave—I am now probably patched up for a little while, but the next attack——"

"Oh, do not say so, my dear, dear father!" exclaimed Fanny, throwing her arms around his neck, and bursting into a torrent of tears.

"I must say it, my child, because I feel it is too certain; and because I would have you seriously reflect, that it is in your power to render my last hours happy, by giving me the satisfaction of leaving you under the protection of one whose honour, probity, and excellent heart assure your happiness. My dear Fanny, you know not—you never will know, I hope, the dangers to which a girl of fortune is exposed, who is left to her own guidance, or at least deprived of the care of her natural guardians. The aim of every designing spendthrift, the mark of every accomplished sharper—it is a thousand chances to one but she becomes the prey of some wretch, to whom her fortune is her only recommendation, and who, if he does not dissipate it, and reduce her to poverty, leaves her to all the miseries and dangers of neglect—leaves her, perhaps, to a worse fate, if she has personal beauty, to become the

"I see—I see!" interrupted Mr. Levison; "well, make your mind easy, I shall tell the women to-night, that I mean to go home at once, and then I shall leave you to settle the rest of the affair on the road."

"What has Papa got in his head now, I wonder!" said Fanny, when her aunt announced to her that they were in a few days to commence their journey to England.

Miss Rachel looked down, and smiled significantly, as she replied—

"I am not at liberty, my dear, to say what are the motives of your father's resolution, but you will, I dare say, soon learn them—if not from him, from Earl Raeburn."

Fanny's cheeks assumed a blush of the deepest crimson, and almost instantaneously became deadly pale, as she beheld Earl Raeburn enter from the garden, with an expression on his countenance that betrayed that he had something of importance to communicate.

She looked round for her aunt, but the old lady had slipped out by the opposite door, and she was compelled to abide the result.

After a conversation which lasted nearly three hours, the Earl quitted Fanny, and entered Mr. Levison's apartment, where Miss Rachel was anxiously discussing with the latter some points of ceremony, which he objected to.

At sight of his lordship their conversation was suspended, and Mr. Levison, with an expression of great anxiety, observed—

"You look agitated, my lord—surely, Fanny has not dared——"

"I have Miss Levison's consent, sir, to announce to

you that she will bestow her hand upon me, at the expiration of one month from our arrival in London," replied the Earl.

Miss Rachel burst into tears of joy, and Mr. Levison, after a silence of a few moments, observed with emotion—

"Then my cares, in this life, will, I trust, soon be ended! But, tell me, my friend, why did you look so pensive and thoughtful, when you first entered the room?"

"I will tell you, then, candidly," replied the Earl, "that your angelic Fanny, though she did not refuse my earnest suit from the first, yet would not consent to it until she had first confided to me the particulars of a prior engagement—the failure of which, she confessed to have been a heart-breaking disappointment to her. I am a bold man, Levison," continued his lordship, forcing a smile, "to venture upon a young wife, who confesses her heart has been, from her childhood, devoted to another—but as she appears fully convinced of his unworthiness, and——"

"Convinced!" repeated Mr. Levison, impatiently, "if I thought she doubted it—if I suspected that she dare bestow one thought upon the rascal, except to condemn and despise him, I would renounce her for my child! I would never see or speak to her again! But I know she hates him! I know she sees his conduct in its proper light! No, no, my lord, you need have no fears on that head."

"Fears!" repeated his lordship, "no, be assured, my friend, had I had a fear or a doubt, Fanny's candour and confidence would have banished it! No, I have no

fears, no doubts, but of my own worthiness of such a prize."

"Fine, loverlike misgivings!" said Mr. Levison, laughing; "but the lordly husband will soon tell a different tale, I am apt to think. However, I heartily congratulate you and myself on this termination of our anxieties. Go, Rachel, go to Fanny, and tell her how happy she has made us all."

Poor Fanny's countenance, however, betrayed but little sympathy with the pleasure her aunt expressed. When she joined her, Fanny had indeed, though scarcely daring to acknowledge it to herself, calculated on a different result, from the communication she had made to Earl Raeburn. She had, indeed, hoped that his delicacy would have induced him to decline accepting her hand, when he was convinced that she had no heart to bestow, and she had trusted that he would find means to satisfy her father, without exposing her to his reproaches and resentment.

The Earl had, however, totally disappointed her expectations. He had, indeed, appeared at first startled at the communication which, with tears and blushes, she had made—he had entered with deep interest into her feelings, and expressed with fervour his indignation at the conduct of Denzil, over whose supposed crimes, however, Fanny's delicacy had cast a veil. She spoke of his desertion as arising from an attachment to another—but she did not reveal to his lordship that which she had been taught to believe, that he not only had seduced, but cruelly deserted that other. Yet, although she suffered him to see, to its full extent, how wholly her heart had been devoted to him whose unworthiness she lamented

rather than condemned—though she acknowledged that her disappointment still preyed on her mind, and rendered her averse to think of a second attachment—Earl Raeburn did not offer to resign his hopes of calling her his.

"I, too, dearest Fanny," he observed, "have for years mourned over the bitter extinction of my youthful hopes—I have, like you, been the victim of misplaced confidence—and have thought my heart dead to all feeling of love or confidence; but I have learned, since I first beheld you, that I was wrong, and you, too, will—I know, I feel you will—in my affection, in my devotion to your happiness, find a compensation for the wrongs that the treachery of one, who never deserved your invaluable heart, has inflicted."

Fanny replied only by her tears; but the Earl did not or would not see that these were given less to past sorrows than to present regrets, and she was at length compelled to yield her reluctant assent to his entreaties that she would fix the time of their marriage.

In a few days they commenced their journey to England, Fanny having in vain endeavoured to persuade her father to protract his residence on the Continent, for a few weeks longer; but Mr. Levison had just heard, by a person who had recently arrived from Paris, that Denzil was still there, and that he had made the most indefatigable efforts to discover the road that had been taken by him, and his family; and, had there been no other motive, that would have been sufficient to have urged his departure.

Though apparently calm, collected, and at times even cheerful, Fanny suffered severely at this final termination of all the hopes which she had so long indulged. She

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beheld with indifference the splendid preparations which were making for a ceremony, which brought to her imagination nothing but images of misery and despair; and she turned away with a sigh from her aunt's elaborate dissertations on the advantages of the union she was about to form, and the amiable character of her future partner.

"I wish to heaven, aunt," she one day exclaimed, when the latter had been more than usually diffuse in her eulogies of the Earl, "I wish to heaven he would marry you! I am sure it would be a much more suitable match—for you are very little older than him, whereas he is old enough to be my father."

"Well, I am really astonished how you can talk so, Fanny," replied Miss Rachel, "such a fine, handsome man as Earl Raeburn."

"I can never look at him," replied Fanny, "without thinking of one whom——oh dear, I do not know what I am talking about—but yet I do wish the Earl was less like one whom I must forget, and yet cannot—since every look——"

"He is certainly very like Denzil, in face and person," said Rachel, sighing. "Thank heaven, the resemblance does not reach the mind!"

"He is like him, too, in manners and sentiments," rejoined Fanny; "his very voice is the same, deepened by time—and I could often shut my eyes, and listen to him for an hour, when he is talking with my father, and believe that it is Denzil speaking."

"You must forget all that, Fanny," observed Miss Rachel, gravely, "it will be very wrong to suffer the remembrance of——"

"I know it will be wrong, aunt—I feel it *is* wrong," interrupted Fanny, with vehemence, "but how can I prevent it? How can I forget one, who, from the very cradle, has shared with me every thought? How can I banish him from my memory, when every look and tone——"

"Hush, hush, my dear child!" exclaimed Rachel, in alarm. "Here is your father! Do not, for heaven's sake, let him see you in this way—for he already looks as if something had greatly vexed him."

Mr. Levison was not long before he revealed to them the cause of his vexation.

He had just learned that Charles, whom he had believed to be in Cumberland, with his wife and her mother, had in reality despatched the former thither, and was now actually in Paris.

"Yes," added Mr. Levison, when he had communicated this intelligence, "he is winding up his career of folly and vice in the society of Denzil Montgomery and his companions! But I have done with them, altogether! I know not why I should torment and vex myself about what I cannot mend or remedy, and so I'll think no more about any of them. Thank heaven, I have still my chief consolation left! I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have secured the happiness of my child. But what is the matter? *You*, too, look as if you had been vexed. Cannot your aunt and you agree about the wedding dress, or——what is the matter, foolish girl?—why are those tears? You are not silly enough, I hope, to be fretting about Charles."

Fanny was glad to seize the plea which her father had afforded her, to excuse her emotion; and Mr. Levison,

who wanted but an opportunity for doing that which his own heart suggested, left the room satisfied.

The name of Denzil, however, had raised a train of recollections and regrets in the bosom of Fanny, which rendered still more revolting to her the union to which filial affection and duty had induced her to consent. It would have been impossible to have exceeded the liberality and delicacy of Earl Raeburn, in the arrangements which were made respecting the fortune which Mr. Levison bestowed on his daughter; nor could even Fanny, indifferent as she now felt to splendour and display, avoid acknowledging the elegance of taste, and the magnificence of spirit he displayed, in the numerous valuable presents which he made her, and the domestic arrangements which he entered into for her comfort and accommodation.

The house which was taken for her town residence, was fitted up with oriental splendour. A separate carriage and servants ordered for her use, and a treaty entered into for an estate in Cumberland, merely because she had, on learning that the Earl's patrimonial inheritance and mansion, which his lordship proposed they should retire to on their marriage, was situated in Sussex, observed in a tone of regret that she wished it had been nearer her father's residence; at the same time demanding of his lordship if he intended to make his regular residence there (in Sussex), when not in town.

"I will reside nowhere but where my dear Fanny feels herself happy and contented," returned his lordship. "I can have no particular predilection in favour of Down Lodge, which I have never visited since I was a boy; and from which I was expelled in disgrace, because I would not silently hear my dear mother sneered at by those

who were utterly incapable of estimating her merits. Little did they then think that the presumptuous boy, whom they treated with so much contumely, was destined to become the possessor of that wealth and title of which they were then so proud; but, peace be with them, I meant not now to speak of their misdeeds, but to convince my dear Fanny that I shall make no great sacrifice in relinquishing Down Lodge as a residence. The interest of my tenants there will not be injured either, since the present occupier, who is an old friend of mine, will be glad, I know, to continue to hold it, and to act as a check upon the steward, who has for many years had the management of the estate, without a single cause of complaint against him having arisen."

Fanny expressed her fear that it might be disadvantageous to his lordship, in a pecuniary point of view, to forego his intention of residing there; but the Earl instantly silenced her by replying—

"Were it the sacrifice of half my fortune, of which I have never felt the full value until since I have known you, I should estimate it as nothing, could it conduce to your happiness; but I do not think that it will be so, or at least, I believe that the sacrifice will be so trifling, as not to be weighed for an instant against your wishes."

"What is the matter, my dear child?" demanded Miss Rachel, who had listened, with pleasure sparkling in her eyes, to the foregoing conversation; and who beheld, with the utmost surprise, tears streaming down the cheeks of her niece, a few moments after the Earl had quitted the room. "What cause can you possibly have for melancholy? Is there a wish that you express, that is

not instantly gratified? Nay, you can hardly form the wish, so quick is he in anticipating——"

"That is exactly what I would complain of!" interrupted Fanny, in a tone of complaint and regret. "Would he but give me some reasonable cause to dislike him, I should not be so utterly miserable—but my heart seems crushed beneath the weight of obligations which I can never repay; for I can never, never give him that affection which he seeks by this means to purchase. Oh no, every day, every hour convinces me more strongly of the fatal truth —that I have no heart to bestow! And I tremble at the thought of pledging my faith to one, whom I cannot love as I should, and feel as miserable as if I were gradually advancing towards a precipice from which I knew there could be no retreat. Yet I know it is too late to think thus—I know it is impossible that anything can save me!"

"Do not—oh do not talk so, my dear girl!" exclaimed Miss Rachel, bursting into tears. "Oh, Fanny, if I really thought this marriage would make you miserable, how wretched should I be! And how should I blame myself for having prompted it! But I *do* hope you will think differently. What can you find in Earl Raeburn that you can reasonably object to? Does he not possess every qualification that a woman can desire, to render the marriage-state happy? Oh, no, you will—you must be happy with him!"

"I shall be happy in my grave!" returned Fanny, in a desponding tone.

Rachel's tears redoubled, but she had already exhausted all her stock of rhetoric and persuasion, and she was compelled to resort to her usual argument, with which she never failed to console herself, though she dared not

impart it to her niece, namely, that, when once Fanny was absolutely married, she would see the affair in a different light, to what she did while there was a chance of escaping it; and would soon become reconciled to what would then be irrevocable.

CHAPTER XXV.

For care and trouble set your thought,
E'en when your end 's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
When ev'ry nerve is strained.——BURNS.

CONVINCED, by the seemingly perfect acquiescence of his friend Charles Levison in the plan laid down for the latter by Mr. Dormer, that he had no longer any cause for fear and uneasiness on his account, Denzil, who knew that his mother would feel surprised and anxious at the omission of his usual visit, entreated Charles to excuse his leaving him for an hour or two, avowing that he was going to see his mother.

"How I should like to see her!" observed Charles; "but I cannot shew myself, with this face. Well, it serves me right!—but do not let me detain you, Denzil—I shall find something to amuse me, till you return."

Denzil gladly accepted the permission, and repaired to his mother, whom he found, as he expected, much alarmed at his unusual absence. It was with the most acute pain that he beheld the effect which even this comparatively trifling excitation of mind had had upon her; for it con-

vinced him that the hopes he had indulged of her eventual recovery, were too sanguine; and, as he gazed upon her pallid cheek and sunken eye, the painful conviction became impressed upon his mind, that all his filial cares and anxieties would soon be terminated in the grave of her to whom they were devoted.

Far, however, from being herself conscious of the unfavourable symptoms which her son's anxiety detected, Elinor appeared to consider her entire recovery as certain, at no very distant period; and spoke of their journey to England as being definitively decided, expressing at the same time her regret that she had not yet gained strength enough to undertake it.

Denzil sighed almost unconsciously as he looked at her faded form, and compared her even with what she appeared when he first beheld her; when, even in the disguise of the lowest poverty, he had been struck with the extraordinary beauty and symmetry of her person.

Strange, indeed, he thought it was that she, who in the midst of wretchedness and want, harassed by the most tormenting fears, and subjected to the most degrading humiliations, had preserved her health unimpaired, and her body as well as mental activity apparently uninjured, should now, while in the enjoyment of ease and comparative luxury, with no fear or anxiety either for the present or the future, at once sink into such a state of personal imbecility, and evince so little energy of mind! But he did not reflect that the exciting cause, the grand stimulus to exertion on her part—that feeling, which had rendered her dead to all others, and which had made her indifferent to fatigue, to hunger, to cold, to all the miseries that attend the steps of poverty and crime—that great

and all-absorbing feeling was now for ever silenced. The man who had so long swayed her destiny, and to whom her mistaken feelings of filial duty and affection had so completely subjected her reason, was no more; and with him had perished all those stormy feelings, which, while they had seemed to give energy to her mind, and strength to her body, had been secretly corroding, and undermining both.

The change, too, from active habits of life to entire inactivity, and the seclusion from all society, after having been for years accustomed to live altogether, as it were, in public, likewise operated most unfavourably upon her spirits, and consequently on her health; while the reflections that were forced upon her in the hours of solitude, rendered nugatory those consolations which the presence and conversation of her son afforded.

Denzil, already dejected from the effects of Mr. Dormer's communication respecting the marriage of Fanny Levison, as well as from the still more recent disturbance between him and Charles, felt most keenly the alteration which he observed in his mother, while she in return discovering, in his silence and melancholy, that something more than usual had affected him, pressed him so hard on the subject, that he was obliged to acknowledge to her, in part, the cause, suppressing only his fears on her account.

The dim and sunken eyes of the invalid sparkled with renewed life, as he related what he had learned respecting Fanny's intended marriage.

Still fully impressed with the conviction that Fanny was her own daughter, Elinor could see nothing in this intelligence but cause for rejoicing. The faint vestiges

of the pride and ambition, which had formerly been such distinguishing traits in her character, were all rekindled anew at the thought of her daughter becoming the wife of a peer. All her weakness and low spirits seemed in a moment to be forgotten—Denzil's dejection was no longer an object of interest—and she continued to express her pleasure and surprise, until at length the patience of the latter became completely exhausted, and he rushed out of the house abruptly bidding her adieu, and promising to return on the morrow.

Totally unfit for conversation, Montgomery, instead of returning immediately home, wandered for nearly two hours, at one moment reflecting on the pertinacious adherence of his mother to the idea that Fanny was in reality her daughter; and the next, bitterly deploring the ill fate which detained him in Paris, though without being able to form any reasonable idea that his presence in London could effect any thing in his favour.

It was considerably past the hour at which he had ordered dinner, when he entered the hall of the hotel, where he found Ned anxiously awaiting his appearance.

"Mr. Levison has, I suppose, been impatient for my coming, Ned?" he observed. "Is he in the dining-room?"

"No, sir," returned Ned, "nor has he found out, I believe, that you were so much behind your time—for he has had company almost ever since you went away!"

"Company!" repeated Denzil, with surprise.

"Yes, sir, Miss Delaney that was—I don't know what she calls herself now—for she did not send up her name. She knew Mr. Levison was alone, she said—for she had

passed you on your way to your '*usual haunt;*' those were her words, sir, as she flew up stairs to him."

"Impertinence!" muttered Denzil, as he passed on to the room in which he had three or four hours before left Charles, and where he found him still seated, with the lady whom Ned had named.

Coldly and distantly replying to her familiar greeting, Denzil hastily apologised for his long absence to Charles, whose looks betrayed considerable confusion.

"Is it so late, then?" observed Charles, looking at his watch. "I declare, I never noticed how the time went."

"That is really a very pretty compliment, Mr. Levison," said Mrs. Wilmington, smiling tenderly upon him; "and the more valuable, because I don't believe it was studied."

"That I am sure it was not," said Charles, briskly; "but what has kept you so long, Denzil?—Nothing unpleasant, I hope, though you look gloomy."

"Mr. Levison has surprised me beyond expression, Mr. Montgomery," observed Mrs. Wilmington; "he has been telling me that the lady, to whom you have been so constant in your attentions, and who *once* was an object of so much interest to me, is actually your mother."

Denzil blushed as he replied in the affirmative.

"I hope," she continued, "you forgive me for what I did, under a mistaken impression respecting her. Heaven knows, I am sincerely sorry if it has done you any harm!"

"It will perhaps teach you to be more cautious in future," replied Denzil coolly, "to know that you have destroyed my every chance of happiness in this life."

"Heavens, I hope not!" returned the lady, affecting great concern; "but tell me, dear Denzil, is there no way by which I can undo the mischief? I am sure I would not mind a journey to England, or any where else, to serve one to whom I am under such obligations."

"The disposition unfortunately comes too late," returned Denzil, turning to the window, with an evident desire to put an end to the conversation.

A few whispered sentences passed between the lady and Charles, and the former, rising, observed——

"I am detaining you from your dinner, Mr. Montgomery, and will therefore wish you good-day. To-morrow, my dear Mr. Levison, I shall call and trouble you with the commission I spoke of. *Au revoir!*" and she left the room, accompanied by Charles, with whom she remained for some minutes in conversation at the top of the stairs.

The dinner was concluded, and they were left alone, before anything passed between Denzil and his companion beyond the ordinary courtesies of the table; but the latter then observed——

"You looked vexed, Denzil, at seeing Julia with me, when you came home."

"I dare say I did," replied Denzil, "for I was *vexed*—more than vexed—seriously grieved."

"But, my dear fellow," said Charles, assuming a gay tone, "you surely are not so outrageously strict as to be offended at——"

"I make no pretensions to what I do not feel, Charles," replied Denzil; "I certainly do not feel pleased, nay more, I am greatly hurt to see you so pertinaciously keeping up a connexion, which though it may be harmless

in reality, will not fail to prejudice you in the eyes of your real friends."

"Well, well, it will be all over after to-morrow," returned Charles, in a petulant tone; "and it was not to be supposed that I could treat a pretty woman with contempt, whose kindness towards me induced her to lay aside the strict attention to decorum which you seem to think so necessary."

"Kindness!" repeated Denzil, sarcastically.

"Yes, kindness, Denzil," replied Charles. "She had heard from St. George an exaggerated account of the injury I had received, and she came to ascertain whether it was the truth."

"And pray, may I ask of what nature is the commission she intends honouring you with?" inquired Denzil.

"I really do not know," returned Charles; "something of no great consequence, I dare say, though—but why do you ask?"

"Only that I so dread her talents for manœuvre, that I am fearful of your involving yourself——"

"Pshaw!" interrupted Charles, "do you suppose, Denzil, that I have lived so long in the world for nothing?—or do you think that you, with your reserved and correct habits, have gained more experience than I have, who have lived among all sorts of folks, and have paid for my experience."

Denzil did not reply to this, though he felt he might very reasonably have expressed a doubt that, even dear as he had paid for it, Charles's experience would be of much service to him, when opposed to the artifices of a beautiful woman, towards whom, it was very evident, he felt much more favourably inclined than she deserved.

Denzil was, however, rejoiced to find that his companion appeared determined rigidly to adhere to the plan marked out for him by Mr. Dormer, towards whom he expressed the most ardent gratitude; and, nothing having arisen to impede his design, on the following day Charles departed for London, having first seen and taken his leave of Mr. Dormer.

It was a source of considerable satisfaction to Denzil, that Mrs. Wilmington did not keep her appointment with Charles; and the former, as he returned to his own apartment, after witnessing his friend's departure, congratulated himself on the circumstance that Charles seemed totally to have forgotten her, and the commission with which she had talked of charging him.

To his no small surprise and chagrin, however, he learned from Ned that Mr. Levison had received a letter from her, before he had left his chamber, and had replied to it, while the messenger waited.

The certainty, however, that the sea would in a few hours divide them, and that, in all probability, Charles would, in change of scene and occupation, soon forget the wiles which would have entangled him, had he remained near the artful and unprincipled woman, whom, every time he beheld her, Denzil regarded with increased contempt, soon banished all remains of uneasiness on that head from his mind; and having paid his usual visit to his mother, and to his great satisfaction found her still in good spirits, and apparently improving, Denzil repaired to Mr. Dormer's, to whose dinner-table he had been pressingly invited.

He was received with the warmest kindness by Mrs. Dormer, and with smiles of unrestrained satisfaction by

the lovely Rosa Somerville, to whom, it was evident, Mr. Dormer had been giving a most favourable account of Denzil's conduct, as respected Charles.

The evening was passed very pleasantly, and it was agreed that on the following morning Montgomery should accompany Mr. Dormer and his niece, on horseback, to visit an English family, with whom the latter were acquainted, who had fixed their residence, for some months, about seven miles from Paris.

At the appointed time, therefore, Denzil repaired to the residence of Mr. Dormer; but, on his way there, he encountered Mr. St. George on foot.

"I was just coming to you, Montgomery," he observed, "to inquire whether you have seen or know anything of that jilt, Julia? Is Levison at home? for I very much suspect he has had some hand in her disappearance."

"Mr. Levison is on his road to England, if he has not actually landed there by this time," replied Denzil, changing colour, as a suspicion of the truth flashed across his mind.

St. George stood for a moment in silent astonishment.

"Then, by heavens, I am right!" he observed. "She is off with him!" he exclaimed, "and I——"

"It cannot be," interrupted Denzil, impatiently, "he never, surely, could act so imprudently—so madly—so devoid of all decency—at the very moment that his friends are taking every pains, and using every exertion, to reconcile him to his uncle—to reunite him to his young and beautiful wife——"

"Oh, his friends may spare themselves that last trouble," replied St. George, in a tone of sarcasm; "for, I very much doubt, if he will not find his young and beau-

tiful wife has provided for herself; and, before he reaches England, it will be well if she has not quitted it with one who places a little more value on her youth and beauty than he seems to do."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Denzil, "what do you mean?"

"I mean that I shall be fully revenged on Mr. Levison," returned St. George, "for I know that Captain Templeton, his *ci-devant* friend and companion, sailed by the packet yesterday morning, fully determined to proceed to Cumberland, and full of hope that he should persuade the beautiful Mrs. Levison to exchange her seclusion with a cross mamma, for the pleasures of a tour in Rome, whither he intended to proceed alone, had not some circumstances induced him to believe that it would cost him no great trouble to get a *compagnon du voyage*, very much to his taste; for which purpose, as I before said, he quitted Paris yesterday morning."

Denzil waited not to hear any more, but, setting spurs to his horse, was in a few minutes at the door of Mr. Dormer's residence.

"What is the matter now, my dear fellow?" demanded Mr. Dormer, as he met him on the landing-place.

Denzil motioned to him that he had something to communicate, which must not be heard by Mrs. Dormer or Miss Somerville; and his friend then led the way into another room, where he was soon made acquainted with the vile attempt which there was no doubt would be made to ruin the young and thoughtless Emma.

"There is only one way that I can hope to save her!" exclaimed Mr. Dormer, after a few moments' agitated reflection. "I will instantly depart for England, and without hesitation proceed to Cumberland, where I will

at once expose to her the character of the man who could thus brutally make her name and reputation the sport of his profligate companions here. It will be no difficult matter, I think, to convince her of his utter worthlessness; and, in placing her once more under the care of her husband, from whom I shall take proper precautions that the whole affair shall be kept secret, I shall, I trust, secure her from all future designs. Emma," he continued, "though thoughtless, is not so destitute of sense or delicacy as to be incapable of seeing and fully estimating the conduct of the worthless wretch, who, I trust, founds his hope of succeeding in his infernal plan, on her love for pleasure, and habits of dissipation, together with her husband's absence and her own unpleasant situation, rather than on any reason he has to believe that he possesses any peculiar interest. At least, of that I shall judge from her own conduct," continued Mr. Dormer, "but I must not lose time. I will instantly go, and give orders for my journey, and will then inform Mrs. Dormer and Rosa that I must leave them for a week or two under your care. I am sure I can very safely do that, without saying one word to you on the subject."

"They shall command my most devoted services, my dear sir," said Denzil, as Mr. Dormer quitted the room, observing that it would be better that the circumstances which occasioned his abrupt departure should be communicated by him to the females while they were alone.

In the communication which Denzil had made to Mr. Dormer, he had entirely avoided mentioning the suspicion, or rather the certainty, which St. George had expressed, that Mrs. Wilmington had accompanied Charles Levison to England. It had, indeed, in the still more

important consideration of the danger that impended over the thoughtless wife of the latter, been for a moment banished from his recollection; but now, when left alone to reflect, it again recurred to his mind, though he could not, even now, resolve whether it would be prudent, at the present moment, to make Mr. Dormer acquainted with it. He was, however, soon put out of all difficulty on the subject; for, in about a quarter of an hour, Mr. Dormer re-entered the room, with an open letter in his hand.

"There is another pretty affair come to light!" he exclaimed, throwing himself into a chair. "If it was not that my regard for that unfortunate girl is greater than even my resentment against her rascal of a husband, I would forswear meddling with their affairs again!"

The letter, which he put into Denzil's hand, was not signed; but the latter, as well as Mr. Dormer, readily guessed that it was written by the young man whom the latter had recognised as his *ci-devant* servant.

It stated that the writer had reason to believe that Mrs. Wilmington had accompanied Mr. Levison to England; and that, from her well-known extravagance and rapacity, there could not be a doubt but that she would bring ruin upon him, if some means were not taken to detach him from her.

"Had you any suspicion of this, Denzil?" demanded Mr. Dormer, looking earnestly at him.

Denzil replied by at once candidly stating all that had passed between St. George and himself, acknowledging, at the same time, that he had not known how to decide, as to the propriety of mentioning what he was by no means assured was true.

"There can be little doubt, I think, now," returned

heard of Charles, who ought to have been in London two days before; but, to make amends for this unpleasant intelligence, Mr. Dormer observed that he had ascertained that Captain Templeton was in town.

"He has, therefore, as yet," he continued, "had no opportunity, if he has ever had any intention, of trying the success of his abominable plan; and as, whatever views he may have, I shall now be beforehand with him, you may anticipate my returning in triumph with the fair damsel, for whom I have turned knight-errant. You will know what good spirits and good health I am in, by this gay style of writing."

Again he wrote to announce that he was with Emma and her mother—that he had succeeded, to the utmost extent of his hopes, in opening the eyes of the former to the precipice on which she stood, and had received her glad assent to his plan of bringing her over, to join his family party on the Continent.

"I shall first, however," he concluded, "endeavour to see Mr. Charles Levison, and shall be guided by what I ascertain respecting him, as to how Emma is to be disposed of. If it is really true that he has brought that infamous woman over, (which there is too much reason to fear,) no consideration on earth shall induce me to leave her with him; but we shall see—at all events, I shall be with you in a week or ten days; therefore, do not expect to hear from me again; for I shall not write, unless something unforeseen should happen."

The prospect of soon seeing Mr. Dormer again, and the success which had hitherto attended his exertions, revived Mrs. Dormer's sinking spirits; and Rosa Somerville, anticipating increased pleasure in the society of her

cousin, who had been the friend and play-fellow of her childhood, and whose estrangement she had long lamented, exhibited all her usual vivacity.

The constant presence of Denzil, who divided his whole time between them and his mother, whose health still continued in the same fluctuating and undecided state ——his constant attentions, and the assimilation of their tastes and pursuits, had created the most cordial familiarity between Rosa and himself. Denzil felt towards her, as he would for an amiable and beloved sister, and Mrs. Dormer treated him with all the confidence and kindness of a mother; while Rosa looked up to his judgment and opinion as decisive on every subject.

How often did Denzil, as he returned from them, and proceeded to visit his mother, wish that it was possible to introduce her to them, in order that he might secure their sympathy and kindness for her; but neither Rosa or her aunt dreamed of the existence of such a person, much less that she was residing within a few hundred yards of them.

A circumstance, however, occurred, which rendered it imperative on Denzil to give that explanation which he had wished, and yet knew not how to give.

Mrs. Dormer, who had for some time appeared to be improving in health, was suddenly attacked with so alarming an illness, that it became necessary to call in a physician; and at the recommendation of some one about her, the same gentleman was sent for, who had long been in attendance on Mrs. Montgomery which was the name the unfortunate Elinor had, at the suggestion of her son, adopted.

In the first moment of alarm, Rosa had sent a hasty

summons to Denzil, and he entered the drawing-room just as the doctor was about to leave, after a conversation with Rosa on her aunt's situation, which he acknowledged was very doubtful.

The latter immediately conceived that to Denzil's recommendation he owed his present introduction, and not supposing that he could have any wish of concealment respecting his mother, he immediately observed that he was just then going to visit Mrs. Montgomery, adding, that he was highly gratified at the great improvement which had taken place in the health of the latter, within the last few days.

"Ah, Mademoiselle," he continued, turning to Miss Somerville, "there are few mothers so blessed in a son as is Madame Montgomery! Such exemplary attention, such tender affection, such anxiety! Ah, *mon dieu*, what a beautiful thing is filial love!"

Rosa's expressive countenance betrayed her astonishment—but the voluble *médecin* did not observe it. He saw, indeed, that Denzil was embarrassed and confused; but, attributing it to the modest feeling which shrank from his panegyric, he only varied his theme by speaking of Mrs. Montgomery, her patience, gentleness, and other amiable qualities, and concluded by expatiating on the surprising and strong personal resemblance between Madame and her son.

Aware that some powerful motive must have induced Denzil's silence on the subject, Rosa would from delicacy have avoided all recurrence to it, when the Doctor had left them; but Denzil felt the necessity of giving some explanation of a circumstance so apparently unaccountable, as his having concealed from those, with whom he was

upon such confidential terms of intimacy, that he had so near and dear a relative as a mother, of whose existence even he had never spoken, much less that she was residing within a short distance of them, and the object of his constant care and attention.

"You must think me a strange, reserved being, Rosa," he observed, taking her hand, while his own trembled with emotion, "never to have spoken to you of the person who has been thus unexpectedly introduced to you; but I cannot now, when your mind is already agitated and occupied by Mrs. Dormer's situation, attempt to engage your sympathy for my unfortunate mother—I have long, I confess, wished that I could gain courage to relate to you the melancholy tale which will best explain my motives for not publicly avowing one, who——"

"Dear, dear Mr. Montgomery," interrupted Rosa, "do not, I entreat, let that man's imprudence and garrulity force you into any avowal that is painful to you."

"I was, I confess," she continued, "having always been led to suppose that you were, as well as myself, destitute of those tender relations, surprised at hearing that you had a mother—but I should despise myself, if I could suffer any motive to induce me to force myself into your confidence, which, I am satisfied, would not have been withheld, but from proper and praiseworthy motives."

"Alas, no, Rosa, you give me credit for more than I deserve," returned Denzil, sighing. "Pride has had the greatest share in producing my silence—but we will go to Mrs. Dormer, and, when she is better, and able to bear conversation, I will relate to both her and you the mournful history, which will add pity to those sentiments with which you now honour me."

From the time this statement was given, Rosa partook of all Denzil's cares and anxieties respecting his mother, whose fluctuating state admitted not of any certain prospect of her final recovery, and yet continually flattered him with hopes. But Rosa's attention was soon wholly engrossed by her aunt.

Disappointed in her hopes of Mr. Dormer's return, whom she had insisted should not be made acquainted with her increased indisposition, the poor invalid required all the care and attention of those around her, to preserve her from sinking into despondency.

The last letter of Mr. Dormer, which arrived just at the period when they had the fullest expectation of seeing him, was far from satisfactory.

Charles had, it seemed, at last made his appearance to his uncle; but the latter, provoked at his unsatisfactory excuses for his delay, and angry with Mr. Dormer, as it appeared, for trying to screen him from his resentment, had as yet refused to listen to any overtures for a reconciliation.

"The consequence is," continued Mr. Dormer, "that Charles is unable, at present, to effect any arrangement with his creditors, and is condemned to play at hide and seek, lest he should be lodged in a prison; and I, feeling myself in some measure accessary, though from good intentions, to his being placed in this awkward situation, cannot leave England, until I have either effected my purpose, or become convinced that it is hopeless to pursue it farther.

"One good, however, I have been able to bring about," he continued. "I have prevailed upon my friend Levison to receive and acknowledge Emma, against whom he

was greatly prejudiced, considering her as the chief instigator of her husband's extravagance and dissipation. Her deserted situation, and apparent sorrow and melancholy, have had such an effect upon him, since I contrived to prevail upon him to see her, that she is now a prime favourite. He is, indeed, very solicitous that she should remain with them, until after Miss Levison's marriage, which, by the by, is postponed *sine die*, or at least till Fanny recovers her health, which is at present very delicate. In fact, it is plain to be seen that Fanny's heart revolts from the union—though it must be acknowledged that, except that he is a great many years older than herself, her intended is all that could be desired by the most fastidious."

"*Except*, indeed!" repeated Rosa, who read the letter to Denzil, without apparently observing the emotion it produced; "that exception, I should think, would be quite sufficient! And all I wonder at is, that Miss Levison should, even for a moment, have been induced to overlook it. It is very natural for papas and mammas not to see that there can be no sympathy between youth and age; but I have no patience with a young girl, who can be tempted by rank and riches to——"

"Hush, hush, my dear," interrupted Mrs. Dormer, glancing at Denzil, in a manner that proved she was much more *au fait* than Rosa, as to the feelings of the latter on the subject they were speaking of; "hush, you cannot judge of circumstances you know nothing of; and you should recollect that it is possible that Miss Levison may have been influenced by very different motives than regard for either rank or riches, in her acceptance of this proposal."

Rosa's ingenuous blush betrayed her sorrow at having incurred this rebuke, which she felt the more keenly, from the serious expression of Denzil's countenance, in which she was generally accustomed to read only approbation, even in her gayest moments; but which, she now thought, concurred in the reproof her aunt had uttered.

In reality, however, Denzil thought little either of Rosa or her aunt, at that precise moment. His thoughts were wholly absorbed by the intelligence which Mr. Dormer's letter had conveyed. He beheld Fanny—pale, melancholy, and despairing—yielding a reluctant consent to what her heart revolted from, in obedience to her father's injunctions. "And even those," he reflected, "dutiful and obedient as she has been, would have failed —I am sure they would have failed, in procuring her compliance, had she not been convinced of my unworthiness—had she not believed me as false as ungrateful, for that affection which she once bestowed on me."

To return to Mrs. Dormer. The disorder against which she had been for some years struggling, seemed daily to gain ground, and Denzil, at length seriously alarmed both for her and Rosa, whose incessant watching and unusual exertions were evidently materially injuring her constitution, wrote, unknown to them, in the most pressing terms to Mr. Dormer, to induce him to forego all other considerations, and return immediately; and, as he had hoped and expected, the next packet brought over both that gentleman and his niece, Mrs. Charles Levison.

The sinking spirits and health of the invalid seemed for a short time to revive; but, in a few days, the faint spark, which had lingered beneath the fostering care of

her attached and affectionate relatives, was extinguished, and the amiable Mrs. Dormer breathed her last sigh, in the arms of her husband.

Denzil, whom she had, during their short but interesting acquaintance, beheld with a kindness and feeling little short of maternal tenderness, was, at her special desire, summoned to her bed-side in the last moments of her life —but, before he arrived, the power of speech had failed, and she could only press his hand and that of Rosa closely together in hers.

The blood rushed impetuously to Denzil's cheeks, as he fancied he discovered in this impressive action, and the beseeching look which accompanied it, a meaning which his heart could not assent to. He dared not raise his eyes to Rosa's, fearful that he should read there a confirmation of that suspicion, which had never before entered his mind; but Rosa evidently thought only of the affectionate relative who had been a mother to her, and when she at length sank almost fainting into Denzil's arms, and suffered him to convey her from the chamber of death, it was evidently with the same feeling of confidence that she would have resigned herself to the care of an affectionate brother.

The remains of Mrs. Dormer were, by her express desire, conveyed to England, to be consigned to their last resting-place, with those of her family; and Mr. Dormer, unable to bear the residence which had only been rendered pleasant to him, as being thought conducive to the health and comfort of her who could no longer be benefited by it, returned from his melancholy task of seeing his wife's ashes deposited in her native earth, with the intention of immediately removing Rosa and her cousin from

Paris; though as yet undecided whether they would return at once to England, or proceed upon a tour through France and Italy.

During his absence, Denzil had learned much from Emma respecting Fanny, whom she acknowledged to be miserable at the prospect of being united to a man she could not love; but while she, on the one hand, induced him to expect that the marriage, which rendered him so wretched, might yet be set aside—she, on the other, dashed all his hopes for himself to the earth, by declaring that Fanny never mentioned him without reprobating his conduct, and speaking of him as one whose memory she wished to bury for ever in oblivion.

Emma had, indeed, for a considerable time, evinced a coolness towards Denzil which had given him great pain; but which, conscious he had not deserved, he was at no pains to remove. This feeling, on the part of Emma, had, however, gradually yielded to his undeviating kindness, and the proofs which she every day beheld, of the sensibility of his heart, and the untiring benevolence of his nature.

From Mr. Dormer, too, she heard how deep an interest he had taken in the welfare of one, who, though estranged from her, she still sighed for; and gradually she began to see, that, whatever might have been the errors which had parted him from Fanny, they could not have deserved the excessive resentment which both the latter and her relatives expressed, whenever his name was mentioned.

Emma, however, had quickly discovered a secret, which she saw Denzil either did not, or would not perceive. She saw that her cousin Rosa was deeply and fervently attached to one who felt not the value of her affection,

but turned with hopeless yet intense longings towards her by whom he was now despised and rejected.

Denzil had, indeed, solemnly declared to Emma, that none other but Fanny ever had, or ever could, become the object of his love; and Emma, though she felt it inconsistent with the respect due to female delicacy, to hint at the nature of Rosa's attachment to him, beheld with sorrow the latter fostering and nourishing feelings which she felt were doomed to be blighted.

Taught, by what she had suffered, to reflect more seriously than her natural character, in the days of prosperity, had promised, Emma's thoughts were so often engrossed by the contemplation of that sorrow which she foresaw her cousin was laying up for herself, in the indulgence of a hopeless attachment, that Mr. Dormer's attention was at length excited; and he drew from her an avowal that at once confirmed the fears and suspicions which he had himself begun to indulge.

"I will at once, however," he observed, "put an end to all doubts on the subject. Painful as it will be, especially at this moment, to renounce Denzil Montgomery's society, I shall feel it my duty so to do, if I ascertain that he is really so wedded to his unsuccessful love for Fanny Levison, as to be incapable of properly estimating my Rosa's affection; and that she has bestowed it upon him, I have long seen—and, I confess, foolishly flattered myself that he would not remain insensible to it."

In pursuance of the plan he had formed in his mind, Mr. Dormer took occasion to announce to Denzil, when they were together, that he had at length resolved to winter in Italy; observing, that he thought the tour

would be beneficial both to his own health and that of the females, as well as likely to divert the grief which Rosa still suffered to prey on her mind, for the loss of her aunt.

Denzil expressed his approbation of the plan, observing—

"At the same time I cannot but regret that I shall be so long, in all probability, separated from my friends."

"And what, then, obliges you to separate yourself from us, Denzil?" demanded Mr. Dormer, looking earnestly at him.

"My interest—my affairs require my presence in England," returned Denzil, blushing.

"Your interest!" repeated Mr. Dormer, "rather say, your fallacious hopes carry you there, my young friend. You cannot, I think, be insensible to the fact that my niece regards you with favour—I know little of you beyond your personal recommendations and the proofs which I have seen of your disposition and principles—but they are such as I am convinced would secure her happiness, and outweigh, with me, all those requisites of birth and fortune which the world think necessary to happiness. For fortune, Rosa has sufficient—more than sufficient to——"

"My dear, dear sir! my kind and ever-respected friend!" interrupted Denzil, distressed beyond measure. "How can I reply to this unmerited kindness and favour? How shall I avoid appearing ungrateful, in acknowledging that I cannot—that my heart is unable to conquer that unhappy passion, which——"

"Say not another word, Montgomery," interrupted Mr. Dormer, trying to maintain his calmness, though

evidently much disappointed and chagrined. "Forget," he continued, "that this subject has ever been mentioned, and you will confer on me the greatest favour that is in your power to bestow. I shall myself try, I assure you, to banish from my mind the remembrance that Rosa, who is ignorant of the offer I have made you, has been rejected."

"What an unfortunate being am I!" exclaimed Denzil; but Mr. Dormer was already out of hearing; and the former, not wishing at the present moment to encounter either Rosa or Mrs. Levison, returned pensively home.

At dinner, from which he could not with any propriety absent himself, the swollen eyes and disordered manner of Rosa betrayed that some communication had been made to her, which had greatly distressed her. Denzil could scarcely think it possible that she could have been acquainted with what had passed between her uncle and himself in the morning. Mr. Dormer had, indeed, expressly stated that she was ignorant of his intention of mentioning the subject; but it was plain that something had greatly affected her, and it was also plain that she had lost her usual frankness and ease of manner towards Denzil, whose eyes she avoided, and whose attentions she received with a timidity and reserve totally foreign to her real character.

Mr. Dormer and Emma also were grave and thoughtful; and, for the first time, Denzil felt himself ill at ease in their society.

The cause of this alteration was, however, soon explained, when the cloth was removed, and the ladies had retired, by Mr. Dormer's observing that he had com-

municated to Rosa his intention of proceeding immediately on the tour he had projected.

"She has, for the first time," he continued, "the very first time in her life, expressed unwillingness to accede to my wishes. She would rather go to London—she did not like Italy—she was tired of foreign countries, though I have heard her a thousand times express her wish to visit Rome, and never, until now, knew her to utter a word like distaste of a residence abroad. It is very provoking," he continued, "that I should just now, when I am so little able to bear it, have to encounter the petulant opposition of a girl, from whom I have hitherto been accustomed to receive the most implicit obedience, merely I suppose because my commands have hitherto happened to square with her inclinations. I have let her know, however, that I will be obeyed, and I trust when, as no doubt she will, she communicates to you the cause of her dissatisfaction, you will impress upon her the propriety of her yielding to my wishes, without giving her any reason to suspect——in short, Denzil, let her see that you are quite indifferent to her——"

"Indifferent, sir!" exclaimed Denzil, colouring. "It is impossible—I can never feel indifferent to Miss Somerville—Her peace and happiness are as dear to me as my own existence!"

"Hem!" ejaculated Mr. Dormer, with peculiar significance; "however, be that as it will, Denzil, I trust to your good sense and prudence, not to suffer Rosa to suspect what has passed between us. Do not let her be mortified by knowing that I have stooped to sue to you for her, and that you rejected her."

Denzil could not, nor did he attempt to frame a reply,

and Mr. Dormer, after sitting some time thoughtful and silent, proposed to adjourn to the drawing-room.

"My uncle has, I suppose, told you the plan he has determined on?" said Rosa, in a low tone, as Denzil seated himself by her side, as usual.

"He has," returned the latter, assuming a tone of calmness and unembarrassment, which he was far from feeling, "and I am surprised," he continued, "to hear that it does not meet your approbation entirely; for, really, I should have thought you would have been delighted with the prospect of such a tour—and a residence of some months in Rome; for my own part, I should have been most happy to have joined your party, but that circumstances compel me to return to England."

"And you mean, then, I suppose, to remain in England?" said Rosa, turning pale, and fixing her penetrating eyes on his face.

"In all probability I shall," returned Denzil, still maintaining his calmness.

Rosa uttered not a word. Her beautiful eyes were instantly cast down, and she seemed totally absent, and insensible to all that passed, until roused by some question which her uncle twice repeated before she could comprehend him.

In a few moments Mr. Dormer led the conversation to the subject of their intended journey, and Denzil had the pleasure to see that Rosa, seeming to recover herself, entered into the discussion that took place with regard to their route, with some portion of her usual spirits.

He could not, however, but discern that her gaiety was forced, and that her expectations in her application to him had been wholly disappointed.

From this time until the departure of Mr. Dormer and his nieces, Denzil was wretched; for he felt that, though their manners remained the same, the hearts of both Rosa and her uncle were greatly changed towards him. Emma, indeed, remained as friendly as usual; but her kindness and confidence were but a poor compensation for the loss of Mr. Dormer's esteem and almost paternal affection, and Rosa's gentle and endearing attentions. It was, therefore, with far less regret than he would otherwise have felt, that he heard that Mr. Dormer had fixed an early day in the following week for their departure.

A long silence followed this announcement from Mr. Dormer; Denzil dared not offer a remark, lest it should draw forth some reply which he could not parry; but when Emma at length observed—

"I suppose, Mr. Montgomery, you will not remain long in Paris after us?" he ventured to say,

"Were I to consult only my own inclinations, I should not stay here one hour after those are gone, who alone can render a residence here pleasant to me."

Rosa's eyes met his at that moment, but they were both withdrawn in confusion; for Denzil felt that Rosa's sought a meaning there, which they could not find; and Rosa experienced but too keenly the conviction, that, however sincere the expression of his feelings, she must not flatter herself that they were meant to be applied otherwise than generally.

Denzil felt a pang of the keenest regret, as he beheld the cloud of melancholy steal over the fair face that he had been used to see beaming with animation; and heard, instead of the gay remark, the lively observation, and the playful witticisms with which she had been wont to amuse

her uncle, and enliven all around her, only the half-suppressed sigh, or the querulous complaint, which betrayed her discontent with herself, and all that was accustomed to afford her pleasure.

Rosa was, indeed, wretched and despondent—her books, her music, her pencil, which had been never-failing sources of amusement and pleasure, all were now "flat, stale, and unprofitable." Even the society of Emma, from which she had anticipated so much, seemed to have lost all charm for her; and the latter, already seriously depressed by her situation, and the mortifications and disappointments she had met with, felt most keenly the change in her cousin. She had anticipated, in Rosa's vivacity and kindness, relief from the melancholy and dulness which her mother's reproaches and her own reflections had created; and she found, instead, that Rosa was even more unhappy, and more discontented with her fate than herself.

Nursed in the lap of fortune, Rosa Somerville had never indulged a wish hitherto that had not been gratified; and, though her excellent understanding and disposition had prevented her contracting those faults which are too often the consequence of unlimited indulgence; yet she was unequal to bear disappointment with that calmness and equanimity which she might have done, had she been earlier inured to contradiction to her wishes.

The time arrived for their departure, without anything having occurred to effect any change in the prospects or intentions, either of Mr. Dormer and his family, or of Montgomery.

Rosa evidently strove to veil her sorrow under the appearance of indifference, while Denzil, agitated with a thousand contending feelings, beheld the hour of separa-

tion arrive with apparently more regret and reluctance than she did, who, in reality, felt that it would be the death-blow to her happiness.

On the evening previous to their departure, Denzil was accidentally left alone with Miss Somerville; and, contrary to the course she had latterly pursued, she did not attempt to leave the room and avoid him, but occupied herself with tossing over the contents of her writing-desk, without appearing at all to regard his presence.

Denzil became confused and agitated; he saw that her indifference was assumed, and that she was in reality totally unconscious what she was doing, though she affected to be so busily employed—for he beheld her repeatedly place and displace the contents of her desk, open over and over again the same papers; and, in short, betray evident signs that her mind was occupied with very different subjects than those which she tried to appear busied in.

Rosa was beautiful—but Denzil had never seen her look so beautiful as at this moment, fluttered between fear and hope, conscious of acting contrary to the dictates of her pride and resentment, and yet still endeavouring to keep up the appearance which that pride suggested.

Her eyes studiously avoided even a glance at Denzil, who, on his part, scarcely dared look at her, and yet could not withdraw his attention from her.

The thought suddenly came into his mind, that this was the last hour they should ever spend together! Would she forget him in other scenes, in new connections?—or would she still continue in secret to cherish that preference of him which she now felt?—were the questions he asked himself. "And could I be otherwise

than happy," he thought, "possessed of the love of such a being—possessed of the esteem, the regard, of all her relatives—and possessed, too, of the means of making her happy? And shall I sacrifice all this real and substantial good, to a shadow?—to the remembrance of one who despises me—and whom it will soon be a crime for me to think of?"

Rosa at that moment raised her eyes to his, with a look of timid irresolution, yet as if longing to break through the reserve which kept them both silent.

Denzil arose and approached her, "Can I assist you, dear Rosa?" he demanded, in a voice faltering with emotion.

Rosa started, but did not reply—and Denzil, taking her hand, added—

"Why are you thus silent? thus estranged from your friend, Rosa? believe me——"

The door opened, and Mrs. Levison rushed into the room——

"Oh, Mr. Montgomery," she exclaimed, "read that, and advise me what I shall do! My uncle is so cruel, he will not listen to me! yet, how can I bear the thought of Charles's sufferings, and in a prison! Oh, Rosa, pity me, and join with me in entreating your uncle to let me go to my husband!"

"My dear, dear Emma!" exclaimed Rosa, "explain what has happened—why are you so distressed?—who is that letter from?"

"It is from Fanny—Fanny Levison," she replied; "she promised me solemnly that she would conceal nothing from me that came to her knowledge respecting Charles, and now hear what she has written? Read it,

Denzil—I cannot!" and she put the letter into his hands.

Denzil felt the blood rush to his face, as he caught Rosa's eyes fixed on him, as he took the letter from her cousin; but the sight of the well-known hand-writing, and, above all, of his own name more than once repeated in the page which his eye glanced over, dissipated in an instant all recollection of Rosa, or of any one in the world but she who had traced those characters—the gentle, lovely being, to whom his youthful heart had been devoted, and who was still nurtured and cherished there with fond idolatry.

"Why do you not read it, Denzil?" demanded the unhappy Mrs. Levison; "there are no secrets there!"

Denzil felt the full import of her words, which were intended to assure him that there was nothing said of himself, which he could object to read to Rosa; and he immediately proceeded with the letter, which was as follows.

"Why, my dearest Emma, will you thus press me to communicate that which, I am sure, it will be far better to withhold from you—that which can only distress you, without your having the power to remedy it? A thousand times have I repented the promise I made, and which you so forcibly remind me of. This prelude will prepare you for the ill news which I have to impart. I told you, in my last, that I had great hopes that my father would speedily be brought to listen to the arrangements which your uncle proposed in favour of Charles, and that I had succeeded in enlisting in his favour a person who at present has more influence with my father than my aunt and myself, who had been forbidden to mention

the name of your unhappy husband. So far had this succeeded, that papa had sent him a sum of money on Wednesday, and had appointed him to come to dinner to-day, with the view of talking over with him the arrangements proposed.

"On Wednesday evening, we all went to Covent Garden theatre, and were scarcely seated, before my aunt descried Charles in an opposite box, sitting between two females, whose appearance was most conspicuous, both from their being extremely pretty, and their being dressed in the extreme of the Parisian fashion.

"Before I could give aunt Rachel a hint to be silent, she had pointed her nephew out to our companion, the Earl of Raeburn, and I saw the latter look very significantly at the ladies. My aunt, too, observed this, and inquired if he knew who they were?

"'I have seen the one who sits on Mr. Levison's left hand,' he replied. 'She was in Paris, at the time I made a few weeks' sojourn there, and was the object of great attention and curiosity, on account of a duel which had been fought on her account by an Englishman named Montgomery.'

"'Good Heavens!' exclaimed my aunt, 'that is the Miss Delaney, whom Denzil Montgomery——'

"I tried to silence her, for I did not wish the whole affair to be discussed at that moment—but you know aunt Rachel's way—she went on with the story of Denzil and Miss Delaney, seeming to forget entirely that it was probable that Charles Levison was in more danger of suffering from his acquaintance with that lady, than ever Mr. Montgomery had been.

"It was not until she had entirely concluded, that Earl

Raeburn expressed his surprise that Mr. Levison should appear to be on such intimate terms with Miss Delaney.

"You may guess, dear Emma, how vexed and surprised I was, after the pains I had taken to interest Earl Raeburn in Charles's favour—after prevailing on him to be his advocate with my father—and succeeding, by his interference, in gaining the grand point, that of procuring an interview between them, which I knew would be the means of a final reconciliation; and then to see all my representations of Charles's penitence and reformation directly falsified by his conduct—for what excuse could he make for his appearance with a woman, whose character he must be well aware of, and whom *he*, of all persons, ought to have avoided.

"I sat silent, for I could not say a word in vindication of Charles, who, totally unconscious of our observation, was chattering and laughing with his companions in the highest spirits. A gentleman entered their box, and spoke to Charles, whom the Earl recognised as an old friend and school-fellow; and, apologising for leaving us a few minutes, his lordship proceeded to that part of the house where they were seated. I saw him shake hands with his friend, and, in a few minutes, I beheld an introduction take place between him and Charles, and the latter retired with him to the back of the box.

"His lordship, on his return to us, informed us, that, on his mentioning that we were in the house, and had seen him, Charles appeared dreadfully confused, but still more so, on his lordship's hinting our surprise at seeing him in such society.

"He inquired, with embarrassment, how it was possible his aunt and cousin could know Miss Delaney, and appeared still more embarrassed when Earl Raeburn can-

didly stated that he had recognised the lady, and mentioned her name, without being aware how intimately the affair, which had made her of such notoriety in Paris, had concerned Mr. Levison's family. Charles, it appeared, did not attempt to offer a word in vindication either of himself or his female companion; and Earl Raeburn feeling, as he said, that he had sufficiently mortified him, left Charles, and returned, with the gentleman whom he had gone thither to join, to our box. On his way to which, the Earl was informed by his friend, that Charles had 'actually brought this Miss Delaney, or Mrs. —— Something, (for I understand she is really married) from France with him. And,' added Captain Falkland, which was the name of his lordship's friend, 'I am surprised at Mr. Levison's imprudence in appearing in public, when it is well known that he is in hourly danger of being arrested.'

"We saw nothing more of Charles—for he and his companions, almost instantly afterwards, quitted the house, or at least that part of it, and nothing more was said of him; for Captain Falkland and Earl Raeburn had not seen each other for four or five years, and they were full of chat upon what had passed in the interim. The Captain accepted Earl Raeburn and my aunt's invitation to sup with us. Unfortunately, papa, contrary to his usual custom, was up when we returned; and, still more unfortunately, Captain Falkland, not having been cautioned, in the course of conversation betrayed that we had seen Charles at the theatre.

"You know how easily my father's suspicions are excited—our silence on the subject immediately convinced him that there was something concealed from him; and we were of necessity compelled to reveal the truth. I

need not tell you how dreadfully enraged he was, at this fresh instance of Charles's folly—but this is not the worst. The next morning, Captain Falkland walked in, before we had finished breakfast—I saw that something particular had occasioned his early visit, which he apologised for by saying that he was obliged to leave town in the evening, and wished to see Earl Raeburn, on business of importance.

"Before, however, he left the room with his lordship, he contrived, unobserved by my father or aunt, to throw a letter into my lap, which I instantly guessed to be from Charles.

"I was right—but you may imagine my grief and surprise, when I read the following words—'Dearest Fanny, —I hope you will think I am punished severely enough for my folly, without losing your favour, when I tell you that I am in prison. I was arrested last night, the moment I quitted the theatre. I know that I deserve all I meet with; but yet, Fanny, I do hope that you will intercede with my uncle to release me; for I know I shall die, if I am left to linger in a prison. I am, indeed, quite ill already, with anxiety and remorse. Falkland, whom I sent for this morning, has promised to do all he can for me; but I know nobody can assist me so materially as you, if you will but exert your influence with your father.'

"Such," continued the writer, "was the letter I received. Need I tell my dear Emma, that I lost no time in complying with the request it contained? But, alas, my father is inexorable! He will not even listen to me for a moment; and Earl Raeburn, though he does not say so, from deference to me, yet I can see he thinks that the

proper method to reclaim Charles, thoroughly, from his extravagance, and teach him to distinguish between his real friends, and those who assume the mask only to draw him into the vortex of dissipation, will be to let him remain where he is, for some time. My aunt, too, is always of the same opinion with his lordship, and will not take my hints that it is in her power, if she would, to release Charles—I have no patience with any of them—so much prudence, and foresight, and calculation!

"My dear, dear Emma, I have been in twenty minds, since I began this letter, whether I ought to send it—but I feel I am bound by my promise, and that you would have just cause to reproach me with having violated it, if I had concealed aught from you. I hope, however, that my next will convey more favourable information, and that, in the mean time, you will believe that I will leave nothing undone that can serve poor Charles's cause—though I am very angry with him, too—more angry than I shall say, now that he is in distress. If Mr. Montgomery is still near you, I would advise you, dear Emma, to tell him what has happened—I know he will not let *prudence* deter him from doing all he can to save his friend—though, at the same time, I know he has it not in his power to do all that he might feel inclined to do—for Captain Falkland tells me that Charles's debts are much heavier than he has been willing to acknowledge; and, of course, he cannot get out of prison till they are all paid. Now, do not fret, Emma, and fancy that he is in want of any comforts, except his liberty—for my aunt and I will take care of that; and I hope and trust that in a few days I shall be able to send you some more satisfactory account of him."

Denzil folded the letter, and remained for some minutes silent—but his thoughts were more engrossed by the writer than the subject. "*Mister* Montgomery!" he repeated to himself, with bitterness, "how coldly does that sound from her; and yet she does me justice—she speaks of me without resentment—Alas, her coldness is worse than anger! If she were still interested enough to feel anger at my supposed offences, I might still have hopes of convincing her of her injustice—but this frigid coldness——"

"You do not think, then, that I ought to go, Mr. Montgomery," said Mrs. Levison, who had been anxiously watching his countenance, "and yet——"

"I do not say that you ought not, if there were the smallest probability that your presence could benefit Charles—but I really think, that, at the present moment, it would considerably add to his distress, and not be productive of the slightest advantage."

Emma burst into tears—it was plain that she had indulged the hope that Denzil would second her in her project of returning to England, and she was proportionably disappointed at his failing to do so.

Denzil's compassionate heart melted at her distress.

"How mad and blind must Charles be," he thought to himself, "to trifle with and disregard the affection which ought to have been so valuable to him, and which, even now, survives his inconstancy and neglect."

"I will talk to Mr. Dormer," he observed, "and if he will consent to your going, I will myself accompany you as far as Dover."

"And why not to London?" inquired Emma, anxiously.

Montgomery blushed—"Because I must return as quickly as possible," he replied, "on account of my mother."

"But I thought Mrs. Montgomery intended to go to England," observed Miss Somerville. "Has she altered that——"

"Oh, no," replied Montgomery, with some embarrassment.

"Then what should hinder my travelling with you and her, dear Denzil?" demanded Emma, "that is, if she would not object."

"I must talk to Mr. Dormer about it," again observed Denzil; "and I will go at once—he is in his own room, is he not?"

Emma replied in the affirmative, and Denzil went in search of Mr. Dormer, whom he found, as he expected, greatly incensed against Charles, whose conduct Denzil was obliged to acknowledge was indefensible.

"Nevertheless, my dear sir," continued the latter, "I would certainly advise you to accede to Mrs. Levison's wishes. Desperate cases require desperate remedies—and I look upon it that Charles is in that critical situation, that he will now be either wholly reclaimed from his errors, or finally confirmed in them. What can be so likely to achieve his perfect reformation, as the tender attentions of a young and beautiful wife—from whom, he must be conscious, he little deserves to be treated with kindness?"

"I see, my niece has contrived completely to enlist you on her side, Mr. Montgomery," observed Mr. Dormer, "though I very much doubt the justice of the arguments you offer. However, Charles shall not have to reproach

me with having stood in the way of his interest—I will no longer offer any opposition to Emma's going—but how does she propose to go? She cannot, surely, think of travelling alone!"

Though aware that Mr. Dormer was acquainted with so much of his unfortunate mother's history as he had thought proper to communicate to Miss Somerville, Denzil shrank from mentioning her name to Mr. Dormer, who, though he had sometimes indirectly alluded to her, had never absolutely spoken of her to him.

Denzil thought that there was something in this silence which testified that Mr. Dormer did not consider her in the light in which his filial affection would have had her considered. Without, therefore, saying a word of Mrs. Levison's suggestion that she could travel with him and his mother, he repeated to Mr. Dormer the offer he had made, of accompanying her as far as Dover.

Mr. Dormer smiled, and shook his head—"That will never do, Denzil," he observed; "for though I should, with the most perfect confidence, entrust Emma, or even Rosa, to your honour—there would be an impropriety, in the eyes of the world, in so young a female travelling alone with you. If, indeed, your mother would have no objection——I know not why you have ever avoided speaking of her to me, Denzil—but I myself can see no reason against Emma's travelling with Mrs. Montgomery, unless she objects to it."

"I should like you to see my mother, sir," said Denzil hastily, and with emotion.

"And I have not the least objection to do so, my young friend," replied Mr. Dormer, with alacrity. "It

is what I have often wished, but did not know how to propose—but I will, if you think it will not be disagreeable to her, accompany you this evening; and, if she consents to take charge of this foolish girl, she may e'en go to her husband, and so you may go and set her heart at rest—for I know it was her who sent you here."

CHAPTER XXVI.

> 'Tis woman alone, with a purer heart,
> Can see all the idols of life depart;
> And love the more, and smile, and bless,
> Man in his uttermost wretchedness.
>
> BARRY CORNWALL.

DURING their walk to Mrs. Montgomery's lodgings, Denzil recounted to his companion the principal heads of his mother's eventful history, suppressing, however, as he had in his previous narrative to Miss Somerville, her marriage to Mr. Levison, and her connexion with the tragical event of his death.

There was, however, a mystery in his (Denzil's) becoming the *protegé* of Mr. Charles Levison, senior, which was very apparent to Mr. Dormer, and which his questions failed to elicit any satisfactory reply to, on the part of Denzil, who, unversed in, and abhorring deception, at once acknowledged that he had reasons for declining to enter upon that part of his own personal history.

"I do not wish to ask you one question, that could

give you a moment's pain," said Mr. Dormer, kindly, "and now we will drop the subject."

Mrs. Montgomery's surprise and confusion at the introduction of a stranger by her son, could be equalled only by Mr. Dormer's. Prepared only to see an invalid, faded by care and sickness, he was so struck with the excessive beauty of features, and elegance of form possessed by the female who arose to receive him, that he remained for a moment or two silently gazing at her, and scarcely believing that she could be the mother of the tall, full-grown young man who took her hand, and presented her as such.

Naturally frank and easy in his manners, Mr. Dormer, however, soon contrived to dissipate the restraint and embarrassment which his unexpected introduction had occasioned; and Mrs. Montgomery, gratified by the respect and attention of her son's friend, was gradually drawn into a conversation, her part of which she sustained with a vivacity and brilliancy of which Denzil had formed no previous conception.

More than once, however, some allusion to the name of Levison, by Mr. Dormer, heightened the colour in her cheek, and occasioned a momentary embarrassment; but Mr. Dormer did not or would not perceive it—and it was not until Denzil ventured to remind him that Miss Somerville and Emma would be uneasy at their absence, (the cause of which they were unacquainted with), that he shewed any inclination to depart.

The proposal which he made, to place his niece under her protection, during her journey to England, was evidently highly gratifying to Mrs. Montgomery, who, long unaccustomed to female society, evidently anticipated with

great pleasure her introduction to the lady, whom Mr. Dormer described as his niece, who was going to England to join her husband.

"It is Mrs. Charles Levison, my dear mother, of whom Mr. Dormer speaks," observed Denzil, who thought the information would come better from him, than from Mr. Dormer.

Elinor bent her head, to conceal the feelings which this information excited, and Mr. Dormer remarked,

"It is an unfortunate name, madam, in the matrimonial way—at least, as far as my knowledge of the family extends. I have never," and he turned to Denzil, "yet known one Levison, either male or female, who made a happy marriage."

"It is, at any rate, Charles's own fault," observed Denzil rising, and standing so as to screen the excessive agitation of his mother from the eye of Mr. Dormer.

"Oh, I am not going to say on which side the fault has been," returned Mr. Dormer, totally unconscious of the embarrassment he was occasioning. "In one or two instances, indeed," he continued, "I know, the fault *has* been on the side of the Levisons. My old friend Charles, I believe, foolishly threw away his chance, from mistaken pride—and of his two brothers, Alfred the eldest——"

"You are unwell, my dearest mother," interrupted Denzil, in a state of the most painful confusion. "We have, I fear, tired you, and you have exerted yourself too much. My mother is so little used to company," he continued, turning to Mr. Dormer, who stood gazing on her pale countenance with a look of alarm.

"I will go immediately, my friend," returned Mr.

Dormer. "I am indeed sorry, very sorry that I should have trespassed so long."

"Go, my dear boy, go with your friend," whispered Mrs. Montgomery, raising her head from his shoulder. "I shall soon be well, when I am alone—alas, I have been so proud and so happy for the last hour or two, that I had forgotten——"

"Forget every thing, dear mother, that can make you otherwise than proud and happy!" returned Denzil, in the same tone. "I will return again, when I have seen Mr. Dormer home, and hope to find you have shaken off this weakness."

During their return home, Mr. Dormer was unusually silent and thoughtful.

Denzil more than once endeavoured to engage him in conversation on the subject of the journey he was about to commence; but the former immediately diverged from the point, into some remark respecting Mrs. Montgomery, who, he said, was, without exception, the most beautiful woman he had ever beheld.

"Has my old friend Levison ever seen her?" he demanded, looking earnestly at Denzil.

"I do not know—I believe not," returned the latter, with confusion. "If he ever did, it must have been very transiently, and many years ago."

Mr. Dormer returned to his musing—"It cannot be!" he murmured to himself, "and yet I have heard that she was exquisitely beautiful—but such a countenance, so heavenly——"

Again he turned, and fixed his eyes on Denzil's face.

"Denzil!" he exclaimed, "I acknowledge I would give the world to have the doubts and surmises which

have forced themselves into my mind satisfied—and yet I fear to name them to you."

"You need not name them, sir," returned Denzil, trying to assume a calmness he was far from feeling; "I can anticipate all you would say—all that you suspect!"

"Good heavens, can it be possible!" exclaimed Mr. Dormer, with horror in his look. "Can it be possible that your mother is the——I cannot utter the word——"

"My mother was the unfortunate wife of Alfred Levison," said Denzil, "but she was not the guilty wretch you believe her."

"Oh, no, she could not be!" returned Mr. Dormer, hastily, "that face could never veil a black, designing heart—and yet, what a tale of horror have I heard!"

"It was a tale of horror!" repeated Denzil, "yet, I again assert, that, in the main points, my mother was innocent—she was more—for she was self-sacrificed! She bore the imputation of guilt, to save the wretch whom she believed to be her father."

"Do not let us see the women to-night, Denzil," said Mr. Dormer, as they at that moment entered the hotel. "I could not bear their frivolous questions; and I am, besides, so anxious to hear the explanation which you will not, I am sure, refuse. We will order supper in my little study, and then——"

"And then I will relate to you the true statement of that affair which drove my unhappy mother from the world, and which, even now, she trembles with horror to recal to her memory."

"I saw it," replied Mr. Dormer. "I saw the look of anguish and alarm which convulsed her features, the moment I uttered the name of Alfred Levison—and the

dreadful conviction instantly rushed upon my mind, that in her I beheld the guilty woman, whose beauty had at the time seemed to make her crime but the more horrid and repulsive."

Scarcely could Mr. Dormer restrain his impatience until the servant was gone who attended to light them to the study, and brought thither the sandwiches and wine which his master had ordered, more to prevent any uneasiness or interruption on the part of his niece Rosa, than from any desire for the repast—but having, at length, fairly got rid of him, and closed the door, he drew his chair opposite to Denzil's, and, with the most intense interest, listened to the full and unvarnished statement which the latter gave, not only of the circumstances of Mr. Levison's death, and of those which had preceded that event, but of all that had since occurred, up to the period of Tyrrell's death.

Mr. Dormer's countenance, as well as his frequent exclamations, expressed the greatest pity for the unfortunate Elinor, and detestation of the wretch who had so basely taken advantage of her inexperience and misdirected feelings. Not a look or a word expressed the slightest distrust that the statement made by Denzil was not the true one.

"But, though I believe, firmly believe, that every word is true that you have uttered, my dear young friend," he observed, "my belief or yours would go but little towards exonerating her in the eyes of the world, were your mother to be recognised—nay, I tremble to think that it would be in the power of any malicious or even busy and officious person, and there are too many such to be met with—but we will not talk of that—we will not think of it, farther than that it is necessary carefully to guard the

secret, which I have so easily discovered, and which, therefore, I fear the probability of others discovering. It would, indeed, be advisable that she should remain abroad, rather than expose herself to the possibility of being recognised in England; but that I fear, without her aid, there would be little chance of your satisfactorily establishing her prior marriage, and consequently your legitimacy, which undoubtedly is of the utmost consequence to you."

"It is everything to me," returned Denzil; "yet I would renounce at once the idea, if I thought for a moment that I should expose to any danger her whose happiness and welfare is, and ought to be, my principal—in fact, my *only* care. The circumstances, however, of your recognition, or rather of your suspicion, my dear sir, are so singular, that it is scarcely possible they could occur again; and, indeed, I am convinced that to oppose my mother's intention of going to England now, would be not only useless, but would perhaps induce her to act precisely in the manner that would expose her to the chance of discovery."

"I wish that I could, with any consistency, now relinquish my intended journey to Italy," observed Mr. Dormer. "I feel so strongly interested in this affair, that I would sacrifice almost any consideration to be able to witness its progress, and assist, as far as my feeble advice and means could assist, in its adjustment."

"I should, indeed, feel happy and favoured," observed Denzil, "for I shall have need of advice—and unfortunately the friend, to whom I should once have looked, and have relied on, will no longer condescend to be my counsellor."

"If you mean Mr. Levison, I fear you are right," returned Mr. Dormer, "for I found him greatly incensed against you, though I never entered fully into the subject; for I candidly confess, Denzil, that I was so wholly engrossed with endeavouring to bring about the affair between him and his nephew, and Emma, that I lost sight of you altogether; but this I know, that when you were accidentally named, it never failed to elicit from him some expression of resentment towards you, and I was expressly forbidden by him to name you to Fanny or Miss Rachel."

A flush of deep resentment dyed Denzil's cheek, at hearing this.

"I have not deserved it," he observed, "and Mr. Levison has acted with cruelty and injustice, in thus condemning me unheard, and upon imaginary proofs, which I am certain I could have confuted, had I been allowed the opportunity of doing so; but it matters little now," he added, with a sigh, "the die is cast, and——"

"But, to dismiss this vexatious subject at once, and to return to that which offers you a much fairer prospect," interrupted Mr. Dormer. "It has occurred to me that it is folly in me to persevere in this journey to Italy, when I see plainly I could effect much more real good by giving it up; for, in the first place, Emma could return with me and Rosa to England, and I should then be on the spot to protect her, should she need it. And, in the second place, I think my experience and knowledge of the world would be of material benefit to you; and a third reason is, that I may be able, perhaps, to expedite an arrangement with Mr. Levison, to free Charles from his bonds."

"And if that were all," replied Denzil, "it would be an object worthy of Mr. Dormer; and, leaving my own selfish views out of the question, I would certainly urge you, my dear sir, to follow the generous impulse of your heart, and return at once to England."

"It is decided!" observed Mr. Dormer, after a few moments' silence, "and I will at once countermand my orders. To-morrow morning, then, I shall be on the road to Calais—I can easily satisfy the two girls as to my motives for thus altering my plans, and you can follow us, as soon as you think proper."

Denzil gladly acceded to this arrangement, which at once removed a load of care and anxiety from his mind; and Mr. Dormer left him to announce to Mrs. Levison and Miss Somerville, who had not yet retired for the night, the alteration which he had made in their destined journey.

On his return, his countenance bore an expression of seriousness and dissatisfaction, which so strongly contrasted with the alacrity and cheerfulness with which he had left him, that Denzil could not refrain from asking him, if anything unpleasant had happened.

"Nothing," he replied, "but what I ought to have foreseen—that women are all fools, and born to torment all who are connected with them."

Denzil could not help smiling at the vehemence with which this was uttered.

"You have no reason, I should hope, sir, to say so," he observed.

"Indeed I have," he replied, "for Rosa has vexed me more than I could have believed, by her foolery. She took it in her wise head that she was concerned in this

alteration, and her fears and surmises that her dignity and delicacy, forsooth, had been compromised, gave rise to a pretty tragical burst of tears, which I was compelled to stop by the mortifying assurance that neither you nor I had, for the last three or four hours, recollected that such a person as her little insignificant self was in existence; but this, instead of satisfying her, only increased her tears, and I was obliged to leave her to settle it how she could with her cousin, who, though less dissatisfied, seemed not less surprised than herself at my sudden change of plan, and my refusal to account for it."

Denzil felt hurt at the idea that Rosa's feelings should have been thus wounded—but the sight of Fanny's letter, the ideas and recollections that it had recalled to his mind, had renewed, with additional force, his repugnance to form an alliance with another; and he felt, at that moment, as if the interruption of the purpose which he had for a moment indulged, of offering his hand to Miss Somerville, and which the sudden entrance of Mrs. Levison had alone prevented, had saved him from certain misery and never-ending repentance.

Late as was the hour at which Mr. Dormer and he parted, Denzil could not go to rest, without again visiting his mother, whom, however, he found much more calm and recovered than he had expected, though she heard, with evident uneasiness and surprise, that Mr. Dormer had relinquished his intention of placing his niece under her care.

It required, indeed, all Denzil's rhetoric to convince her that this sudden alteration had not arisen from his having suspected her identity, and considered her unworthy of the charge; but at length he succeeded in

tranquillising her, and in gaining her consent to see Mr. Dormer again in the morning, before his departure, which the latter had most particularly expressed his wish to do.

The impression which the beauty and misfortunes of this interesting woman had made on the mind of Mr. Dormer, was not weakened by the second interview, during which, however, he carefully avoided any allusion to the circumstances of her sad history; and when he took his leave of her, it was with the oft-repeated hope that they should speedily meet in England, under more propitious circumstances than the present.

Denzil's avowed intention of following them in a few days, took from their parting all formality—yet Rosa's countenance, in spite of her efforts to appear gay, betrayed considerable gloom and melancholy; and Denzil's usual ease and frankness were changed for embarrassment and constraint, from the consciousness that he was the object of her continual observation, and that she seemed at a loss what interpretation to put on his conduct.

It was therefore a considerable relief to him when he beheld them depart, and he returned to share with his mother the hopes which Mr. Dormer had so confidently suggested, during their final conversation, that all their present uncertainties and doubts would have a happy and successful termination.

The favourable appearance which Mrs. Montgomery's health had for some weeks assumed, continued so unaltered, that, in little more than a week after Mr. Dormer's departure, Denzil yielded to her solicitations that they should commence their journey, and in less than another week the mother and her son entered that me-

tropolis which they had last quitted under such different circumstances.

Anxious to secure his mother a few days' repose, without the chance of being exposed to any agitating circumstances, Denzil immediately procured apartments for her at Brompton; and then, without delay, proceeded to the hotel to which Mr. Dormer had directed him.

On sending up his name, he was immediately shewn into a drawing-room, where, however, to his disappointment, he found only Miss Somerville, whose welcome of him, though kind and frank, seemed restrained by a timidity and embarrassment which had the corresponding effect of rendering Denzil somewhat confused and embarrassed.

He had scarcely, however, answered her inquiries as to his journey, and the state of his mother's health, before Mr. Dormer made his appearance.

"I am glad you are come, my dear boy," he observed; "for I am wretchedly dull and low-spirited, and I can find nobody that will take the trouble to be a little amusing."

"I am sadly afraid you will be disappointed, if you expect me to be so, sir," returned Denzil, smiling.

"Oh, no—do not suppose I over-rate your merit so much," replied Mr. Dormer; "but, at any rate, your arrival will afford some new source of thought, if not of active employment, and that is worth a Jew's eye to one who is heartily tired of himself and all about him—as I am at present."

"Thank you, uncle, for that kind compliment," observed Rosa, with somewhat of petulance.

"Well, well, my dear, I know I am somewhat ungrateful in saying so—for I believe you do your best to

cheer me," returned Mr. Dormer; "but the truth is, Denzil, I have found myself so thwarted and disappointed, in all my views and hopes, that I have been ready to hang myself from vexation."

Denzil expressed his sorrow, and Mr. Dormer proceeded to inform him that he had, immediately on his arrival in London, visited Charles Levison, who was confined in the King's Bench.

"I found him," he continued, "apparently very contented, and seemingly quite reconciled to his situation; but I was far from being satisfied that this arose from a proper feeling; and I was still more convinced of this, from the manner in which he received the intelligence of Emma's arrival, and her determination to visit him.

"Far from appearing pleased at the thought of seeing her, he protested strongly against her coming to such a place, and declared that he should be wretched if she persisted in coming.

"I did not, I acknowledge, even at the time, give him credit for so much feeling as he pretended to, on her account; and I had a strong suspicion that some other motive was at the bottom of it. This suspicion was soon confirmed—for, at the very moment I was leaving him, a lady, whose appearance fully corresponded with the description I had heard of Miss Delaney, entered his room with a confidence and self-possession that shewed it was not the first time she had been there.

"Charles hung his head, and looked, as you may suppose, completely abashed, while I inwardly determined to put an end at once to her visits. I therefore affected not to know who she was, and observed to Charles that, of course, I supposed the lady was a friend of Mrs. Levi-

son's, though he had not thought proper to introduce me to her, and that she would undoubtedly be happy to hear that Mrs. Levison was returned to England, and would be at the prison in a few minutes.

"Bold and daring as the lady had looked, a moment before, her confidence seemed at once to forsake her, and she burst into tears. Charles appeared as if he knew not what to say or do; and I, without taking any notice of her tears, arose, observing that Mrs. Levison would think every moment an age, till I should return. You may guess, although I put on this indifferent air, that I was puzzled how to act; for to have brought Emma there, under such circumstances, would have been madness; and how to return to her I knew not, with such a tale. I had not, however, got outside the gates of the prison, before the lady whom I had left with Charles passed me, with fury in her looks, and, anxious to learn what had occurred, I turned back.

"I found Charles pacing the room in great agitation—he started, when he saw me re-enter the room.

"'You need not reproach me, sir,' he observed, hastily; 'I am quite punished enough. Do not suppose that that woman visited me here by my desire. She is my pest—my torment, and I never wish to see her again!'

"I soon learned that the cause of all this was, that Miss Delaney had been led to believe that Charles was only suffering from temporary embarrassment; and that, as soon as his friends knew of it, he would not only be released, but would have plenty of money at his command. My observation, however, had at once led her to suspect the truth of the matter, and she had loaded him with reproaches for having, as she said, deceived and

deluded her into leaving France; and had left him with a threat that she would be revenged upon him.

"What could I do," continued Mr. Dormer, "but listen to his promises and expressions of contrition—and agree to conceal from Emma all that had passed? I did so, and conducted her to him; he received her with apparent kindness—but I could plainly see that he regarded her more as being likely to serve him by getting his uncle to pay his debts, than from any other motive."

"And where is Mrs. Levison?" inquired Denzil.

"She remains still with him," returned Mr. Dormer. "The little romantic fool thinks it a merit, to bear the miseries of confinement with her husband, and refuses to leave him; but I fear she will have a long time to stay, if she remains there till he gets out; for Mr. Levison is so enraged against him, that I have never yet been able to prevail on him to listen to me, when I have tried to bring them to some arrangement. I am just going to pay my usual morning visit to the King's Bench," he continued; "will you accompany me? Emma, I know, will be happy to see you."

Denzil assented, and they proceeded there together.

It was the first time Denzil had entered the gates of a prison, and his heart sank with melancholy anticipation of the gloom and horror which he expected to find within.

To his great surprise, however, a far different scene met his view. All appeared to be engaged, either in business or diversion; and Charles himself, instead of being found, as Denzil expected, sitting gloomy, inactive, and dispirited, was so deeply and intensely engaged in a game at tennis, that he could not for some minutes,

though he saw Denzil and Mr. Dormer waiting for him, approach to welcome the former to England.

"Well, have you brought me any good news?" he demanded, as he accompanied them to his own room, where, however, Denzil found his visions of melancholy abundantly verified in the person of Emma, who looked the personification of despair. He could not, indeed, feel much surprised at this, when he beheld her, who had within a few months been surrounded by every luxury, and indulged in every extravagant whim that folly and thoughtlessness could suggest, now confined to a small and inconvenient apartment, and left for hours to brood alone over the past, and contrast it with the present.

At sight of Denzil, however, her face cleared up, and she hastened with a smile to congratulate him upon his safe arrival, and to inquire how his mother had borne the journey.

"I have a strange secret to tell you," she observed, in a low voice, while her uncle and Charles were engaged in conversation, "a secret concerning yourself—but I know not how to see you alone."

"Cannot you write?" returned Denzil, very much surprised and agitated.

She nodded assent, and then added, in a loud tone, "And where is Mrs. Montgomery residing now?"

Denzil mentioned the place, and Emma, who had evidently asked for the purpose of getting his address, then turned to her uncle, and joined in the general conversation.

On their way home, Mr. Dormer, for the first time since they had met, spoke of Denzil's present affairs.

"I have not forgotten, my dear boy, nor lost sight of

your interest," he observed; "but, I am sorry to say, on the main point, I have been in the outset disappointed; for all the inquiries I have made, have not been able to ascertain more than that Lord Alberton, your father, has again quitted England; his last residence appears to have been the Clarendon Hotel; but from thence he departed, some months ago, for a tour on the Continent."

Denzil felt that this was, indeed, a grievous disappointment—but his thoughts were soon taken off from it; for, the moment after, Mr. Dormer exclaimed—

"There are some friends of ours, just gone into that shop, Denzil; did you see them?"

Denzil put his head out of the carriage-window, just time enough to see Fanny Levison and her aunt leaning on the arms of a fine-looking tall man, whom he immediately guessed was the intended bridegroom.

Pale and breathless, he sank back into the corner of the chariot, without uttering a word. The sight seemed to have obliterated the last remaining hope which had still lingered in his heart.

Mr. Dormer regarded him with surprise and evident alarm.

"My dear friend," he observed, "for heaven's sake, rouse yourself, and conquer this emotion! I wish I had said nothing about them—but I did not suspect you would feel so acutely, what you must have long been prepared for."

"It is all for the best!" replied Denzil, in a melancholy tone; "but the surprise, at this moment, was so great that——but how well and happy she looks! She was smiling—smiling in his face—she thought not of the wretched heart-broken——but I am ashamed of this

weakness—I will not think of her! Oh, no, I will forget her, or remember her only as the wife of another."

"She is not yet married," observed Mr. Dormer, with emphasis, "nor do I agree with you that she looked well or happy—happy, I am sure, she is not."

Denzil looked earnestly at him, but remained silent.

"Yes, I repeat it," said Mr. Dormer, "I am well convinced that Fanny is not happy, and that she would give worlds to be released from her present engagement. Yet she would not suffer me to speak to her of you—her only wish, she said, with tears standing in her eyes, was to forget that such a person was in existence."

"There has been some treachery, some cruel treachery practised between us," exclaimed Denzil; "how else could she ever have been led to form such a wish? but it is too late for me now to think of it—I can only reiterate her wish, and pray that I may forget her!"

The intelligence he had to communicate to his mother, of Lord Alberton's absence from England, and the uncertainty whither he was gone, sufficiently accounted to her for the depression under which he laboured, when he returned home; and he therefore refrained from mentioning to her that he had even seen Fanny, lest he should betray to her the real cause of his agitation.

On the following morning, he received a letter from Mrs. Charles Levison:—

"Dear Denzil, I could not rest," she observed, "until I had sat down to communicate to you a strange discovery I have made. You may be sure my first visit, as soon as I arrived in London, was to the Levisons, for my uncle would not let me accompany him to this place, until he

had first seen Charles, and ascertained how he was situated; and so, while he went to the King's Bench, I went to St. James's Place, where I found Fanny and aunt Rachel, luckily, by themselves; they were both very glad to see me, but very angry that I should think of going to the prison to Charles, who, they said, did not deserve that I should care about him; and then they began to talk of this Miss Delaney, or whatever her name is; but that which surprised me was, that Fanny told me she was convinced that the woman she had seen in the box at the theatre with Charles, was the individual person who came to her at Paris, and represented you as having seduced and ruined her. I have not time to tell you half the abominable tale she told, at that time, to Fanny and Miss Rachel, and afterwards repeated, it seems, to Mr. Levison himself—but this I know, that she made you appear in the blackest colours, and Fanny, till I explained it all, and convinced her, actually believed that your mother, Mrs. Montgomery, was a woman of bad character, to whom you were entirely devoted.

"Miss Rachel had been so impressed with the story told her by Miss Delaney, that she would not be convinced that the companion of Charles at the theatre, and the modest, penitent, young damsel who had excited so much pity and compassion in her bosom at Paris, were the same; and Fanny and her aunt had so warmly discussed the subject, that, by mutual consent, it was agreed it should be dropped entirely. The moment, however, Fanny told me the story, which was as soon as her aunt was gone out of the room, I determined, even at the risk of displeasing Miss Rachel, to do all in my power to vindicate you; and, accordingly, as soon as the old lady

returned, I commenced by speaking of—(which was, indeed, no more than justice)—your kindness and attention to me while I was in France, and the obligations I was under to you, for your conduct towards Charles. I could perceive that poor Miss Rachel sat upon thorns—her natural goodness of heart would not allow her to depreciate your merit; yet she feared, I saw, the effect my praises of you would have upon Fanny—I went on, however, without seeming to notice her fidgets and interruptions, and spoke of your devoted attention to your mother, and then Fanny began to appear interested, though she had before affected to be quite indifferent.

"'You little thought, I dare say,' I observed, 'that every moment that could be spared from his attendance on you, when you were in Paris, was devoted to comfort a sick and suffering mother?'

"Aunt Rachel stared at me for some moments without speaking—

"'Do you know Denzil's mother, my dear?' she at last observed; 'and who she was? Have you ever seen her? What proof have you that the person you speak of *was* his mother?'

"'What reason could I have for doubting it, ma'am?' I replied. 'As to who she was, I know nothing—I never asked any questions—but I believe my uncle can tell you all about it, for he has seen her, and is greatly interested for her—indeed, he could talk of nothing but her beauty, and the grace and elegance of her figure, for three or four days after he visited her.'

"Miss Rachel shook her head, and sighed—'Beauty without discretion is a fatal gift, my dear,' she observed.

"I could not, of course, contradict this, especially as I know good Miss Rachel intended it as a monitory hint for your humble servant.

"Fanny, who had sat all this time as if petrified with astonishment, now burst into tears.

"'Thank God!' she exclaimed, 'then, after all, he is, as I have all along in my heart believed him, guiltless of deceit and treachery! Have I not always said, aunt, that the truth would one day or other come to light? Oh, I am so happy, so very very happy!'

"Poor Fanny, happy as she was, or professed herself to feel, I could, however, see that her happiness came too late, and she continued to weep until the entrance of her father and Earl Raeburn compelled her to retreat to her own room, whither I accompanied her.

"I dare not betray confidence so far as to tell you, Denzil, all that passed between us—but my friendship, both for you and her, induces me to say that I think you would act very wrong, if you suffer any motive to prevent your seeing Mr. Levison, and vindicating yourself from the aspersions that have been cast upon you. I do not say that there is any certainty that it would make any material alteration in Mr. Levison's present views—for I am afraid that nothing short of a miracle would induce him to yield his hopes of seeing her the wife of Earl Raeburn; but, for your own credit, and for Fanny's satisfaction, I think every thing ought to be cleared up between you.

"I have written to you with a great deal of freedom, dear Montgomery, but I know you will attribute my having done so, not to any impertinent wish of dictating to you, but to the real cause—my sincere wish to see

you and Fanny happier than you now are, and as happy as you desire to be.

"Your friend,

"EMMA LEVISON."

Denzil read this letter with astonishment. What could Julia have alleged against him, that could have so embittered both Mr. Levison and Rachel; she, who was always so warmly his friend? His first impulse was to go immediately to Mr. Levison, to demand justice from him, and an explanation of the false charges and misrepresentations which had blighted all his hopes of happiness; but again he read Mrs. Charles Levison's letter, and the decided conviction she expressed, that nothing would prevail on Mr. Levison to forego his intention of uniting Fanny to Earl Raeburn, seemed to render valueless the vindication he would have sought.

"How could I endure," he exclaimed, "to be received by them on the cold footing of a friend—to behold another in possession of that happiness, which I fondly thought would be mine? Oh no, better is it that I should remain excluded from their society—forgotten and disregarded!"

With all the fickleness and inconsistency which his despair induced, in a few minutes he again altered his determination—he would write to Fanny herself, he would demand from her whether she would sacrifice herself and him to a false sense of duty. Her father, if he refused to do him justice, could have no right to compel her to misery and despair; and that she was miserable, at the prospect of being united to Earl Raeburn, every line of Emma's letter proved to him beyond a doubt.

A sleepless night was passed in doubt and irresolution

by the unhappy Montgomery; but at length he determined to see Mrs. Charles Levison, and advise with her whether he should write to Fanny.

Before his mother and himself had finished breakfast, Mr. Dormer was announced. He pleaded his anxiety to see Mrs. Montgomery, and congratulate her on her safe arrival in England, as his motive for so early a visit; but Montgomery read in his countenance that something more than usual had occurred, and he was soon confirmed in this conjecture.

"I was surprised," he observed, after the first compliments had passed, and Mrs. Montgomery had got over the tremor which his appearance had at first occasioned, though his friendly and respectful manner towards her was calculated to put an end to all fear or embarrassment on her part—"I was surprised at receiving a visit from an old friend of yours and mine, after you and I had parted yesterday."

Montgomery readily comprehended that the old friend was Mr. Levison; but he did not mention the name, lest it should agitate his mother. He took the first opportunity, however, of leading Mr. Dormer into the next room, under the pretext of shewing him some articles he had brought from Paris, and there learned that he was right in his supposition.

"I could not think what had brought him so unexpectedly," continued Mr. Dormer, "but he soon let me into the secret, by asking me if it was true that you were in London. I replied, of course, in the affirmative, adding—

"'If you had come a little sooner, you might have seen him—for he has just left me.'

"'I do not want to see him,' he replied, with a deep

sigh, 'at least not just now, though I am very sorry to hear that he is here, without my being able to ask him to my house.'

"'And why should you be unable?' I demanded. 'I am sure Denzil has done nothing that deserves banishment from your house.'

"'I begin to think so myself,' he replied, 'but it is no use my beating about the bush with you, Dormer, and so I will come at once to the plain case. The truth is, that I am alarmed lest the arrival of this boy, just at this time, should defeat that which I have set my heart upon effecting. I will tell you, candidly, that I had once made up my mind to consent to Montgomery's marrying Fanny—but in doing so, I sacrificed all my own feelings and prejudices; for, though I have always regarded him with the strongest affection, there were circumstances, independent of his possessing no fortune, that rendered him the last person in the world whom I should have chosen for my daughter—not but the lad is fully worthy of her, or any woman, for I do not believe there is his superior on the face of the earth.'

"'I am glad to hear you acknowledge that,' I observed, 'and now, to save you any further explanation, I will tell you, at once, that I am fully acquainted with the circumstances of his birth, to which of course you allude, as the obstacle to your free consent.'

"'I do mean that,' returned Mr. Levison, 'but, as I said before, I had once determined, in order to restore Fanny to health and happiness, to overlook all obstacles, and unite them to each other. I went over to France with that view—but circumstances arose, misrepresentations were made—I believed him unworthy—and my purposes

were changed. You know what has since occurred—Fanny is now on the point of marriage with a man every way deserving of her—one who possesses birth, title, fortune—and, in addition, the noblest heart and most correct principles——'

"'Well,' I observed, seeing that he paused, 'and what does all this tend to? I knew all this before.'

"'I will tell you, at once then,' he replied; 'your niece Emma, Mrs. Charles Levison, has been, it seems, busying herself in Montgomery's cause—I don't mean to say that all she has told Fanny is not perfectly true and correct—but it never could have come more *mal-apropos*. It has revived all Fanny's romantic and nonsensical attachment to Denzil—and only this morning she went so far as to tell me, if he were to come and claim the fulfilment of the promises she formerly made him, she should feel herself justified in giving him her hand, although her marriage with Earl Raeburn is so nearly concluded, that next Thursday is fixed for the ceremony; and at the same time she hinted that Montgomery had already arrived in London.'

"'Well,' I observed, 'and what do you mean to do?'

"'Dormer,' he replied, 'you have known me for many years—and you never knew me to depart from my word. I have sworn—solemnly sworn to her, and I repeat it to you—yes, by my hopes of salvation, I swear—that, if she refuses to marry according to my wish, I will never again acknowledge her as my child! What I have done for Montgomery, I cannot retract—I would not wish to do it—but, if she marries him, she shall never have a shilling of my fortune; I would sooner leave it all to Charles, to make ducks and drakes with, as I know he would, but

she shall never have it. And yet I have that opinion of Denzil, that I can scarcely believe he would act in opposition to my will—but I have come now to you, as a friend, to ask you if you think that he has any intention, any plans in view, to oppose me?"

"I replied, that I could answer for you that you had not," continued Mr. Dormer; "nay, I went farther—for I told him that I did not believe, were it possible for Fanny herself to offer to become your wife against his will, that you would accept the offer."

"You did me justice, Sir," said Montgomery, raising his eyes, for the first time—for he had covered them with his hand, as he listened, with breathless attention, to this long and agitating detail. "Yes," he continued, with animation, "Mr. Levison shall find that he is not deceived in his estimation of me! He shall find that my gratitude to him is superior even to my love for his daughter; and Fanny shall never hear of the wretched Montgomery, until—" he paused, as if unable to name the period, and then added, "until she has fulfilled her father's wishes—and then I may proudly present myself to my benefactor as having, in some measure, repaid him, by the sacrifice of that which is far far more valuable to me than my life."

Mr. Dormer pressed his hand without speaking, and Denzil, after a few minutes' silence, during which he seemed struggling to attain the appearance of composure, said, in a low tone—

"Let us return to the other room, my dear Sir, or my mother will suspect there is something extraordinary in our absence."

Mrs. Montgomery's eyes sought in her son's countenance some explanation of the cause that had given rise

to the long conversation which had detained them; but Denzil avoided her looks, and Mr. Dormer soon contrived to draw her into conversation, and prevent her paying too accurate attention to the former, who with difficulty concealed his agitation.

On the departure of Mr. Dormer, the questions which she had been longing to put, could no longer be restrained, nor could Montgomery attempt to elude them.

"I will tell you at once, dear mother," he replied, "Fanny is to be married on Thursday next."

"My dear boy, and does that alone make you look so wretched?" she observed.

"I cannot enter upon the subject," he hastily replied; "but I will solemnly assure you, that was the only information Mr. Dormer had to give me, and was the only theme of our conversation."

"Heaven bless her, and grant that she may be happy!" uttered Mrs. Montgomery, clasping her hands with fervent emotion.

"Amen! amen!" ejaculated her son, in a solemn tone; and then, overcome with the thoughts and feelings that rushed upon his mind, he caught up his hat, and, hastily observing that he should be back in a few minutes, ran out of the house.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Think not that I would look on them, and live!
A spirit forces me to see and speak,
And for my guerdon grants *not* to survive.
My heart shall be pour'd over thee and break!—BYRON.

THE days that intervened between the period of Mr. Dormer's communication to him, and that fixed for Fanny's marriage, were passed by Denzil in a state of delirium. Every hour seemed to increase his wretchedness, and it was only in the presence of his mother, and from his regard to her feelings, that he could control the expression of his despair.

From Mr. Dormer, who was a regular visitor every day, he learned that the marriage ceremony was to be solemnized in St. James' Church, and that the bride and bridegroom were to depart immediately for Cumberland, where Mr. Levison was, in a few weeks, to join them.

Fanny, Mr. Dormer said, had resigned all her opposition to her father's wishes; and Mr. Levison was so rejoiced at the near termination of all his fears and anxieties, that he, at Earl Raeburn's persuasion, had given a *carte blanche* to Mr. Dormer to settle Charles's affairs, and enable him and his wife to join in the nuptial festivities.

Charles was therefore released from his confinement, and had, for the present, taken up his residence with Mr. Dormer and Miss Somerville.

Once only Montgomery ventured to enquire of Mr. Dormer if Fanny seemed contented and happy.

"I have never seen her myself, for the last ten days, when I have called," replied Mr. Dormer; "but I learn from Rosa, who is to officiate as one of her bridemaids, that she appears in high spirits; though, Rosa says, she sometimes thinks they are rather feigned than real, and that her looks often contradict her words and manners."

"I will see her once more," thought Denzil, "and that, I hope, will be the last time!"

In pursuance of this resolution, on the evening preceding the important day, he informed his mother that he was going out early on the following morning, and should probably not return till late in the evening, and therefore requested she would not wait dinner for him.

Mrs. Montgomery's eyes expressed considerable surprise and curiosity at this announcement—but Denzil continued to maintain his assumed calmness, and he bade her good-night with a degree of cheerfulness in his manner, which completely lulled all suspicion that he purposed any thing extraordinary in this unusual absence.

Montgomery, in reality, had no fixed purpose for the following day, except that of once more beholding the object of his ardent passion, and of being convinced, by ocular demonstration, that she had indeed renounced him for ever; and when he spoke of his absence till the evening, it was only to obviate his mother's uneasiness, and prevent her suspecting what was really his object in leaving the house before her usual breakfast hour.

From Mr. Dormer he had learned that the bridal party were to be at St. James's, precisely at ten o'clock; and, nearly an hour before, by means of a bribe to the pew-

opener, he obtained admission, and took his station where he could have a full view of the parties entering the church, without being himself seen. For some time he remained alone—but the silence and solemnity of the place, far from tranquillising, served to increase the intenseness of his emotions. Every minute seemed lengthened to an hour, and he could scarcely believe that his watch had not stopped its motion, when he from time to time applied to it, to see whether the moment he so dreaded, yet longed for, was near.

It wanted now but five minutes—a door opened, and several well-dressed persons, whom he conjectured were actuated by curiosity only, were admitted, and took their seats in different parts of the church.

Montgomery turned impatiently from them—it seemed to him profanation, that the eyes of strangers should gaze upon a ceremony to him so awful and important.

Again the church-door opened, he heard a slight buz, which informed him they were at hand; and in another moment he beheld Fanny—her cheeks vying in whiteness with the veil which was thrown over her head, and her unsteady steps supported by one who, though he walked with firmness and self-possession, looked scarcely less agitated than his companion.

A film seemed for a moment to come over Denzil's eyes, and he sank down on the seat of the pew, without power to breathe, while the loud throbbing of his heart increased to the most intense agony.

When he again raised his eyes, they stood at the altar. The clergyman had opened his book, but at that moment a shriek of the most heart-rending anguish echoed through the vaulted roof, and a female darted towards them, exclaiming ——

"My husband—Oh, God, my husband!" Montgomery's senses seemed to reel. Could he trust the evidence of his eyes—it was his mother! In another moment he was at her side, attempting to raise her from the ground, on which she had fallen at the feet of Earl Raeburn, who, pale and motionless, gazed on her, exclaiming —"Elinor! Can it be? Has she risen from the grave!"

"My dear mother! speak to me!" exclaimed Montgomery, regardless of all but the death-like countenance of her whom he now supported in his arms, while he frantically called upon all around for assistance, to save his beloved mother.

"She has fainted! Oh, Denzil be composed—she will recover!" exclaimed Fanny's trembling voice, as she knelt beside him, and administered the volatiles which she held in her hand.

The surprise and consternation which had at first paralyzed all present, now yielded to the earnest desire to render every assistance to the unfortunate Elinor, and her scarcely less agitated husband.

"You had better retire, my lord," observed Mr. Dormer, who retained more presence of mind than any of the party; "retire with Mr. Levison; and, as soon as Mrs. Montgomery is sufficiently recovered, I will———"

"Mrs. Montgomery?" repeated the Earl with wildness—"Is she called by that name? And who, then, is that young man? Tell me but that, and I will submit to whatever you propose!"

"That young man, my lord, is her son—and, I think I may add, yours! But all will be explained—suffer yourself to be persuaded."

"I will—I will—Great God, how mysterious are thy ways!" exclaimed Earl Raeburn.

Leaning on the arm of Mr. Levison, his lordship quitted the church; but the confident prediction of Mr. Dormer, that Elinor would revive, was not fulfilled.

She revived, indeed, so far as to give evident signs that life was not wholly extinct, but her glazed eye wandered around without a ray of consciousness, and the medical attendant, who had been hastily summoned, expressed his wish that she should be removed to her home without delay.

"She shall be taken to my house, with your permission, Montgomery," observed Mr. Dormer. "It is too far for her to be taken to Brompton, and she will be better attended."

Denzil briefly expressed his gratitude for the friendly offer; and his still insensible mother was conveyed to one of the carriages in waiting—the doctor, Miss Somerville, and Montgomery himself, accompanying her; while Mr. Dormer took upon himself to convey Fanny, and Mrs Charles Levison, who was also present, to St. James's Place.

Some hours had passed before Mrs. Montgomery, (as we shall still, for the sake of perspicuity, call her,) recovered her recollection. Her son was sitting by her bedside when she first spoke.

"I have not dreamed it all?" she observed, looking round her. "I surely saw him, and he it was, who was to have married——Oh, God of heaven, by what strange miracle was it that I was inspired to go there! But where is he?—will he not see the wretched——Oh, no, no,—yet, my son—his son—his noble son! He must—he shall acknowledge———"

"He will, my dear mother, do not thus agitate your-

self. Mr Dormer has been with him—has explained every thing—and he waits only till you are sufficiently recovered to bear the agitation, to acknowledge, in the presence of all our friends, your claims and mine to his affection."

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed, with emphasis. "I have no claims! I have forfeited all. But let him come now, my son, my dear—my noble boy! Let him not delay to satisfy my anxious heart, for I am dying! I feel that I am dying! Nay, my child, look not thus upon me—for my last moments will be blessed—will be happy! But, again I entreat you, not to lose a moment in summoning him to come to me!"

Rosa stole softly out of the room, to communicate to her uncle the desire of the dying sufferer, and soon returned to announce to Montgomery that the Earl was already in the house, and would attend immediately.

In a few moments he entered the room, and advanced with tolerable firmness to the bed-side. Mrs. Montgomery was raised in her bed, and supported between her son and Rosa, whose attentions to her were incessant.

"Elinor, my own long-lost—my beloved wife!" uttered the Earl with difficulty.

She stretched out her arms to him, and sunk silently in his embrace; and then, turning to Denzil, she threw one arm around his neck, as if to draw them nearer to each other, while a smile of the most ecstatic joy irradiated her countenance———but the next moment it faded away, her eyes closed—the spirit had fled for ever!

* * * * * *

For many minutes the father and son remained silent and motionless, supporting the lifeless form of her who was now for ever lost to them.

"She has fainted!" whispered Denzil, turning to look for Rosa Somerville, who had retreated from the bedside at the moment Earl Raeburn had taken the place she had before occupied.

Rosa hastily stepped forward, with the nurse, whom she had beckoned from the farther end of the room. A moment of breathless suspense followed. The experienced attendant shook her head.

"It is all over!" she observed, in a low voice. "Poor lady, I thought it would be so! I knew that change was for death—but, thank heaven, she has made a peaceful end!"

Denzil started——"Dead!" he exclaimed, pressing his lips to the cold forehead, which now seemed like marble beneath the touch. He looked up in the face of Earl Raeburn, and beheld his lips quivering with suppressed emotion, while his eyes remained firmly fixed on the countenance of her, whom he had so fondly loved, and to whom that love had been the source of so much misery.

The kind-hearted and thoughtful Rosa had glided out of the room, at the instant the nurse had spoken; and Mr. Dormer now entered with the physician, whose significant look confirmed the fatal truth.

"One moment—only one moment longer," returned Earl Raeburn, in reply to Mr. Dormer's entreaty that he would quit the melancholy scene—"let me gaze one moment longer on that face, which has for years hovered nightly over my pillow, and which I had long believed was——" His voice failed, and he veiled his manly brow with his hand, to conceal the tears that gushed from his eyes.

Mr. Dormer's upraised finger silenced the common-

place remonstrance and condolence which the nurse was about to offer. Denzil had remained silent and motionless, from the moment that he discovered that his mother was indeed gone for ever—but his lips and cheeks almost vied with the paleness of those on which he now impressed a parting kiss.

"You are not going thus in silence, my——my son?" faltered the Earl, extending his hand, as the latter turned to leave the room.

Denzil eagerly grasped the hand he offered.

"Another time—not now—I cannot!" he uttered, and then burst from the room, to give vent to the feelings which oppressed him almost to suffocation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

——There are, alas,
Spirits more sensitive—on which such things
Light as the whirlwind on the waters; souls,
To whom dishonour's shadow is a substance
More terrible than death here and hereafter;
Men, whose vice it is to start at vice's scoffing——
BYRON.

NEVER, perhaps, could any hearts be found in which joy and sorrow were more strangely blended than in those of Denzil Montgomery and Earl Raeburn, when, on the morning after the unfortunate Elinor's death, they met in Mr. Dormer's library.

The corpse of Mrs. Montgomery had been removed at midnight to her late residence at Brompton, to remain there until its interment.

Denzil had watched by the inanimate remains of her whose sufferings had endeared her to his heart, and effaced all recollection of her errors, until day-light, and then retired, to endeavour by a few hours' repose to calm his mind, and enable him to meet with firmness the parent to whom he had become known under such strange and melancholy circumstances.

How did he now, as he reviewed all the circumstances, rejoice that his mother had so pertinaciously refused to credit the belief that Fanny was not the child whom she had been compelled to desert! For it was that belief that had induced her to enter the church, where she intended to have remained a concealed spectator of the nuptials of her, whom she still considered to be her own child—her Elinor. But what must have been her horror, when she recognised, in the noble and still handsome face and form of the bridegroom, the well-remembered object of her love!—the man to whose fatal love she owed all the misery, the danger, the disgrace she had endured—the father of her children—the husband of her young affections!

And Fanny—how must she feel at this discovery?——Denzil dare not trust himself to think of her, and reproached himself, for the gush of transport which broke involuntarily across the gloom, as he called to remembrance the image of Fanny, her soft and beautiful eyes glistening through the tears that blinded them, as she knelt beside his mother at the foot of the altar. She had tried to soothe him, too—yes, even amidst the horror, the distraction of that moment, he had heard her voice—heard her call him her "dear Denzil," as she strove to persuade him that his mother would recover.

A thousand tumultuous thoughts crowded on his mind—at one moment he shuddered with horror, at the recollection that although circumstances had, for the present, interrupted their union, Fanny was still the affianced bride of the earl of Raeburn, and that the latter, though he had been deeply affected by the unexpected appearance and subsequent death of his once beloved Elinor, might still persevere———But Fanny, would she now consent? Oh, no—he was sure she would not; and Mr. Levison himself could not—dare not be so cruel!—Besides, would not the latter, in all probability, deeply resent the conduct of the Earl, in having been so entirely silent on the subject of his former engagements. These, and a thousand other thoughts and conjectures, passed through the disturbed and heated brain of the afflicted Denzil, until all further hopes of sleep were banished by the delivery of a note, which a servant brought to his bedside.

It was from Earl Raeburn, and, after a brief introductory sentence, concluded as follows.

"Can you doubt my extreme anxiety to see and acknowledge my son? Let not the fatality which has so long kept us in ignorance of each other, be imputed to me as a crime, nor think that I do not fully participate in your grief. Come, then, and let us share together our regret for the irreparable loss we have both sustained. I have learned from Mr. Dormer some most interesting particulars of your history—but I have yet much to learn, that I would willingly hear from your own lips. I shall anxiously await you at Mr. Dormer's, to whose kindness and attention we are both so deeply indebted."

Within two hours from the receipt of this, Denzil was introduced into his father's presence by Mr. Dormer, who immediately left them together. Some time, however, elapsed before either could attain sufficient calmness to enter into those details which each were so anxious to hear—and it was long before Denzil could command himself to speak of his mother, except to utter his grief for her loss—a grief which was heightened by the circumstances that had hastened it. "She had died," he said, "just at the moment when she beheld her most ardent wishes realised—when she beheld that happiness, which had so long been denied her, within her grasp!"

It was, perhaps, fortunate that the affectionate son could not read all that was passing in the heart of his surviving parent—for it would not probably have increased the respect and affection he was disposed to bestow on him, to have known that the Earl, however much he regretted the circumstances attendant on Elinor's death, however deeply he mourned the miseries she had suffered, still felt that, had she lived, it would not have been in his power to have compensated for those sufferings, in the way which his son seemed to consider as natural and indispensable. How could he, bearing the high name and station he did, publicly acknowledge and take to his arms, as his wife, the unfortunate who stood branded with disgrace and infamy—even though she were really innocent of all that had been attributed to her? But that was not the case—not even her son's fond and filial attachment could remove from her the foul stain of having taken advantage of the unsuspecting fondness of the unfortunate Alfred Levison—of seeking her own aggrandisement at the expense of every feeling of honour,

every principle of morality! What where her vows at the altar, but deliberate perjury?—and what had been her life since, until the period when her son's unexampled affection had rescued her?—No, never—dearly as he loved her—deeply as he lamented her fate,—never could Elinor have been restored to her place in society by his means; and as he gazed upon the noble and animated countenance of the youth who was destined to perpetuate his name and title, he felt that he could scarcely regret that death had removed that which would have proved a barrier to the full indulgence of that pride and affection which he was disposed to feel for such a son.

And he was right.—Denzil was too tenderly attached to his mother, to reason coolly on the subject of her errors—and too unworldly, to calculate the consequences of his acknowledging and protecting her. He dreamed not that, had she lived, his father would have hesitated to have done her justice in the face of the world—nor did he consider that he would have considered himself fortunate to have the power of rendering her remaining years happy. Fortunately, he was spared the uneasiness which the knowledge of how widely different were their ideas on this subject, would have caused; and, on every point in which the name of Elinor was concerned, there existed no difference of opinion between them.

With feelings of the deepest anguish and regret, the Earl listened to the mournful detail which his son, as briefly as possible, gave at his request, of the sorrows and sufferings which had expiated in his eyes, and he trusted in the eyes of Heaven, all her frailties and errors. The awful death of Tyrrell—the author of those errors, the sharer in those calamities, which had been their conse-

quence—was heard and related with shuddering horror—but, even on this point, the feelings of the father and son differed very essentially. Denzil lamented that he had not lived to be convinced of the enormity of his guilt, and to have endeavoured to atone for it, while the Earl only considered his death as an advantage to society, and an earthly judgment for crimes which, though they had escaped the just punishment of the law, could not elude the vengeance of heaven.

"And that man was once my companion!—nay more, my most intimate friend!" he observed. "Even now I can recal his insinuating tones,—the keen glances of his penetrating eye,—the apparently frank and jovial thoughtlessness of his manner,—the sparkling wit, the ready *bon mot*—the lively intelligence of his conversation—the animated and liberal sentiments which seemed to flow from his heart—all, all that could effectually veil the corrupted venom that lurked beneath, did Martin Tyrrell possess! How, then, could I wonder that I was deceived? And Elinor, too, so young, so beautiful, so uninstructed in all that she should have been taught—alas, her mind was then a fair unsullied page, and, but for the disastrous event of our separation, how different would have been the records inscribed thereon! Oh, with what agony did my heart yield to the conviction that she was undeserving of the love, the adoration which I felt towards her—and, even when I could no longer doubt—when every hope of our re-union had vanished for ever—still did I turn with indifference from the whole sex—there were none worthy to supply the place of Elinor—none who could fill the aching void which she had left in my bosom! Never, until within these few months, did I behold the

female who could create more than a temporary feeling of admiration in my bosom. The mild domestic virtues, the sweetness of disposition, and the exquisite sensibility of Miss Levison, first awakened in my heart the feeling that I might yet be happy—that pensive, retiring melancholy (of which I dreamt not then the source) which I observed in her manner, so different from the vanity, the frivolity, and lightness of those of her sex, who possess superior personal attractions, was to me the most alluring charm—but I am giving pain to you, by thus dwelling on feelings which have been, I find, the source of much misery to you and her, and which I ought the more especially to regret, as having led to the melancholy catastrophe which I shall never cease to lament; and yet, how evidently has a guiding hand directed all which, at the time, has seemed only the effects of chance! But for the attachment which I felt for that lovely girl, I should perhaps have still remained abroad, pining and discontented, without a single tie to bind me to life—while you, though happy in the consciousness that you were fulfilling a sacred duty, could have had little hope of ever reaping the reward of your exemplary conduct. My poor Elinor, too, would in all probability have left the world without the satisfaction of uniting two hearts, whose feelings and interests will, I trust, be henceforth undivided."

Denzil bowed in gratitude upon the hand which his father extended to him, but he could not trust himself to speak; and the Earl, after a short pause, continued—

"I have not, of course, seen Mr. Levison, or any of his family, since the event which so materially changed the relations in which we stood; but I understood from Mr. Dormer, that the ladies of the family sent repeated inqui-

ries, and that Mrs. Charles Levison was actually in the house, when the final event took place, and remained a considerable time with Miss Somerville in the chamber of death. Poor Fanny, her gentle nature has received some severe shocks, but I trust the eventual certainty of happiness, which must now present itself to her mind, will be a powerful restorative."

Denzil's heart throbbed with the mingled sensations of pain and pleasure, which these observations excited; he felt that they were only such as he had a right to expect his father would make, but this was not a time—he dared not even think of the happiness that awaited him—and there was something inexpressibly painful to him in hearing the Earl speak even of Fanny, much more allude to the connexion which had been so abruptly terminated.

The entrance of Mr. Dormer was a welcome relief.

"I would not intrude upon you," observed the kind-hearted old gentleman, "but I am fearful that you have both forgotten that you have been nearly five hours together, and have taken no refreshment. The mind, I know, will for a time sustain the body, but there are certain limits which cannot be passed without producing ill effects, and those limits you have both passed—since I do not suppose you, Denzil, have breakfasted any more than his lordship?"

Denzil replied with truth that he had felt neither inclination nor necessity for food.

"Then it is quite time you should feel both," returned Mr. Dormer; "and now, if you will take an old man's advice, you will both come with me into the other room, and let Rosa make breakfast for you. She has but just risen—for I laid my commands upon her to remain in

bed till I sent for her, that she might recruit her strength a little by rest."

Denzil would have wished to decline this invitation; in the present state of his mind, solitude was, he felt, his best soother—but he saw his father was disposed to accept it, and he therefore silently acquiesced.

Rosa Somerville's eyes filled with tears as she raised them to Denzil's melancholy and pallid face. Mr. Dormer tried to keep up a conversation on indifferent subjects; but the hearts of all present were too full, and the breakfast was despatched in almost total silence.

"And now what are you going to do with yourself, my dear?" said Mr. Dormer to Rosa, when she rose to leave the room.

Rosa hesitated, and a slight blush crossed her cheek. She looked at Denzil, whose eyes were fixed in mournful abstraction on a beautiful marble group of Niobe, weeping over her children, which was placed on a cabinet near him.

"You are right, my dear," observed Mr. Dormer, who instantly comprehended the source of her hesitation, "the walk will do you good—I would not have you ride, as the day is so fine—and you can then bring us accurate intelligence how our friends are. Have you any message, my lord, to Mr. Levison, of which Rosa can be the bearer?"

The Earl replied in the negative.

"I must suspend all explanation," he observed, "until after the last duties are paid to—" he hesitated a moment, and then added,—"my wife; and then, if there should be any feeling of anger on the part of Mr. Levison, from whom alone it is to be expected, my son will, I trust, be the mediator between us. But I hope better things, I

confess, of my kind friend, who will, I am sure, however he may feel hurt at the unfortunate publicity attendant on the late events, be convinced that it was not in my power to avoid it."

Neither Mr. Dormer, to whom this was addressed, nor Denzil, made any comments on it. Both, perhaps, were at that moment thinking that it would be as well, at present, to avoid any discussion on the subject, and both, too, were probably of opinion that a little more candour on the part of the Earl, would certainly have exculpated him from all blame, if it had not brought about those explanations which had now been productive of so much pain to all parties.

It was with great reluctance that Denzil yielded to the persuasions of Mr. Dormer and the Earl, to remain with them during the remainder of the day; but nothing they offered, could prevent his returning to Brompton at night, nor alter his determination of remaining there until the funeral ceremony should take place. He knew, indeed, that custom authorised the desertion of the most beloved relative, the moment that death had broken the tie of kindred or affection; but his heart refused to submit to this selfish practice, and nothing but his extreme desire to behold his remaining parent, and the equal anxiety expressed by the latter, could have induced him, for one hour, to have quitted his home, so long as the cold remains of his mother reposed there.

At the dinner-table they were joined by Miss Somerville, who apologised to her uncle for being rather late, observing that she had not been at home more than ten minutes.

"Our friends are all well, I hope?" observed the Earl.

Rosa blushed, and, in a confused tone, replied—"I did not see Mr. Levison—nor indeed, but for a moment or two, any of the family, except my cousin Emma, and Mr. Charles Levison."

Denzil involuntarily cast a scrutinizing glance upon her, but Rosa's eyes were fixed on her plate, with a look of sorrow and perplexity, which evidently arose from the subject on which she was questioned.

Mr. Dormer, too, looked up from his dinner, as if to read in her countenance an explanation of the evasive expression she had used, while Earl Raeburn's looks betrayed, more openly than either of the other parties, his surprise and disappointment, at not receiving a more direct answer to his question.

Nothing further, however, was said, until the cloth was removed, and the servants had retired; and then Mr. Dormer anticipated the Earl by saying,

"Is there any secret reason, Rosa, why you could not reply directly to the interrogation of his lordship respecting the friends you visited this morning? If there is, no one, I am sure, would wish to trespass on your confidence—but if there is not——"

"I will at once explain why I did not immediately answer," returned Rosa; "and what I have to tell you, though probably it will eventually prove of little consequence, was nevertheless sufficiently vexatious and mortifying as to induce me to wish to reveal it only to my friends."

Earl Raeburn bowed in his most graceful manner for this implied compliment, and Rosa proceeded——

"On reaching St. James's Place, I did not think it necessary to make any formal inquiries; but, having told

Thomas to return for me at half-past four, I entered the hall, and was proceeding towards the staircase with my usual freedom, having hitherto considered myself as much at home there as here, when the porter, with a hesitating tone and look, said—

"'I am afraid, ma'am, the ladies are engaged;—that is to say, I don't exactly know, ma'am, whether they will see anybody—but if you'll please to walk in here,' and he opened the front-parlour door, 'I'll ring for Miss Levison's maid, and she can tell.'

"I was thunderstruck at this—but the thought instantly occurred to me, that the poor man had received some orders, which he had mistaken, and which could not be meant to include me; and I turned back on the step of the parlour.

"'Miss Levison, I suppose, has given general orders, James, to be denied; but, you may be assured, she did not intend——'

"'It wasn't my young lady at all, ma'am, he interrupted, respectfully bowing, 'but master himself; and I'm afraid—but pray do walk in, till Mrs. Susan comes—I dare say it will be all right,'—and away he hurried, before I had time to say another word.

"I waited in the parlour nearly a quarter of an hour, and several times I was on the point of walking out of the house, without any explanation of this strange treatment; but at last the door opened, and Charles entered. He had just come in from the street, and came into this room by accident, without knowing I was there.

"'My dear Rosa, what in the world are you doing here, by yourself?' he exclaimed, looking at me with surprise.

"'Nay,' I replied, 'you must require an explanation of Fanny, or Emma, whom I came to see—but to whom, as it appears, I am denied admittance.'

"Charles looked as much surprised as I had done, when James first asked me into the little parlour.

"'Do, pray come up stairs with me, cousin,' he replied, 'and let us understand what all this means. I have not yet seen any of the good folks, for I breakfasted and went out early.'

"I was about to refuse, and ask him to see me home—but, upon second thoughts, it struck me that I should be acting as captiously and unreasonably as themselves, to quit the house without knowing what had occasioned such a strong resolution, and accordingly I went up stairs.

"In the front drawing-room stood aunt Rachel, looking the very image of vexation and uneasiness.

"'How do you do, my love?' she said, taking my hand, with her usual kindness, and then, hurrying out of the room, she added, 'you must excuse me, Rosa, for I am very busy, very busy, indeed!'

"'Where is Fanny, aunt?' said Charles, following her. I did not hear her answer, but I had already discovered that Emma was in the back drawing-room, the folding doors being closed; but I could hear her voice, and hear, too, that she was very angrily remonstrating with some one, whom I presently discovered to be Mr. Levison.

Charles returned into the room on tiptoe, with finger on his lips, to enforce silence, and I was thus unwillingly obliged to hear what was passing in the next room.

"'You certainly may do as you please, Mrs. Charles Levison,' said the old gentleman, in reply to some obser-

vation from Emma—'I have certainly no controul over your actions; and, if you choose to see your cousin, I cannot forbid it—but I have made up my mind about Fanny, and I will be obeyed. It is hard, indeed, if I am to be balked in every way.'

"We heard him then go out by the other entrance, and in a moment Emma opened the folding doors and came to Charles and me.

"She had been crying bitterly, and I soon learned that it had been occasioned by Mr. Levison's determination to leave London, immediately, for Cumberland; and, during the short time he remained in London, to exclude every body who might call. He had, it seems, given orders to that effect to the porter, and had even, I believe, by name specified the Dormer family."

"He is an obstinate old fool!" muttered Mr Dormer, angrily; "and so, then, you did not see poor Fanny, my dear?" he added, in a louder tone.

Rosa replied in the negative, "I understood from Emma," she continued, "that she had not quitted her room, and knew nothing of her father's hasty project, nor his prohibition of the visits of her friends."

"There seems a fatality attendant on me," observed Earl Raeburn, "that I should be doomed to be the cause of unhappiness to those whom I most respect and esteem. I trust, however, this breach of ancient friendship between you and Mr. Levison, sir, will not be very lasting."

"Pshaw, my dear sir, do not suppose that this gives me a moment's uneasiness on my own account," returned Mr. Dormer. "Levison is like a spoiled child, who because he cannot get the plaything he has fixed his heart

upon, demolishes all that he can get at around him—if he is not prevented," he added, with a meaning smile, "and that must be our care."

Denzil made no remark, but his spirits, if possible, became more depressed by the idea of Fanny suffering from the captiousness and petulance of her disappointed parent.

Heavily and wearily the hours passed on;—from time to time, Mr. Dormer, or the Earl, started some topic of conversation, which might, at any other time, have led to a pleasing and animated discussion; but their hearts were not in it—their minds were wandering to very different subjects, and gradually they again dropped into silence and meditation.

Denzil was on the point of bidding them farewell, when Mr. Charles Levison was announced. He followed the servant, before either of the party had time to utter a word.

"You are surprised, I dare say, to see me at this time of night, good folks," he observed, with his usual confidence of manner; "but, I know, Mr. Dormer's doors are open at all times to the distressed."

"You have no reason, I hope, Mr. Levison, to rank yourself in that class," replied Mr. Dormer, very gravely.

"Why it is not exactly on my own account I am come," he replied, in the same flippant tone, "but, the fact is, my obstinate, perverse, provoking uncle, has taken it into his wise head to start off to Cumberland, to-morrow morning; and, not content with taking Fanny, who, I know, would give one of her eyes to stay——"

"I will wish you all good-night," interrupted Denzil, who had been standing half-concealed by the window-curtains, looking at the moon, which was shining beautifully clear and bright.

"Denzil, my dear fellow, I declare I did not know you were in the room!" exclaimed Charles, advancing to shake hands with him, "and I hardly know now whether to congratulate or condole with you; and yet, I think, after all, you have much more to rejoice than to grieve for; it was a narrow escape, though, wasn't it?" he added, in a lower tone; "but, you know, I always said you and Fanny——"

"Pray do not speak on that subject now," interrupted Denzil, in great agitation, and he made an attempt to pass Charles, who he now discovered with sorrow was not perfectly sober.

"Where are you hurrying to, Denzil?—though that is not the name, I suppose, which you are henceforth to bear. Egad, but it will be a hard task to learn to call you William—but that's your proper name, aunt Rachel says. However, be your name whatever it may, it cannot alter you—you will still be my own old friend, playfellow, and monitor, as I used to call you."

"It is a pity that you have not profited a little more by his lessons and example," said Mr. Dormer, gravely; "but come, Charles, do not detain your friend, who has got a long walk before him—for I cannot persuade him to take the carriage."

"A walk!" reiterated Charles. "Where are you going, then? Oh, I recollect—but do you sleep there, now? Brompton, is it not?"

Denzil replied in the affirmative.

"Well, then, I'll walk with you, as far as the door, for I want to talk to you," returned Charles, "and I don't know when I may have such another opportunity."

"But you forget that you want to consult Mr. Dor-

mer," observed Denzil, who by no means relished the thought of such a companion, in his present state of mind.

"Oh, all I've got to say to you, my dear sir," said Charles, addressing Mr. Dormer, "is, that my uncle wants to drag Emma with him into the country; and as she has no decent excuse for declining it, and is sure she shall die if she does go, she wants you to be kind enough to send her an invitation to———"

"I will have nothing to do with it, sir," interrupted Mr. Dormer; "and I wonder at Emma's thoughtlessness, and still more at yours, in making such a proposal."

"There—I knew I should get into disgrace!" said Charles, without appearing the least abashed; "but come, Denzil, let's be off, or I shall get another lecture when I go home, for keeping the family up." And with a bow to the Earl and Mr. Dormer, and a nod to Rosa Somerville, he dragged Denzil out of the room.

"Well, you are a lucky fellow!" he observed, as soon as they were out of the house.

"Lucky!" repeated Denzil, in a tone of unfeigned astonishment.

"That is to say, I mean you are lucky, in some respects," he replied. "To be sure, your mother's death has thrown a gloom upon you for the present—but, then, it is an event that must have taken place, sooner or later—and, really, I can't see, all things considered, that there's much to grieve about—for, as I was saying to Emma, this morning———"

"Forgive me, Charles," interrupted Denzil, impatiently, "your arguments may probably be very correct—but I cannot, at the present moment, listen to them."

"Well, well, I don't want to force them upon you,"

returned Charles; "but I'll tell you what I wanted particularly to talk to you about. The fact is, you know—for it's no use beating about the bush—that the match between the Earl and Fanny is off! Now, I see you are impatient to interrupt me, Denzil—but the fact is, that all the misery both you and Fanny have been suffering for nearly two years, has arisen from your backwardness in speaking your mind freely—I could prove it—but I do not want to hurt your feelings—I want to serve you, if I can; and therefore I am come to-night to tell you, that, if you are foolish enough to let my uncle carry Fanny off into Cumberland, as he proposes to do, without making an effort to prevent it——"

"What effort can I make, Charles? how can you talk so thoughtlessly?" replied Denzil.

"Why, then, I'll just tell you what I would do, were I in your place," returned Charles, with an air of decision. "I would persuade Fanny, without further ceremony or delay, to elope—and, when you are once married, leave Earl Raeburn and my uncle to settle matters; and, you may be sure——"

"Charles, let me seriously advise you to go home to bed," interrupted Denzil, vexed and irritated at his folly. "You have now convinced me of what I suspected, from the moment I saw you enter the room to-night, that you are not sober; and, in the present state of my mind, I cannot contend with such folly."

"Home!" reiterated Charles, contemptuously, "what home have I to go to? I am sick to death of the twaddling stuff I hear at my uncle's; and there's Emma—they are making her as great a fool as themselves! No, I shall not go home at all, to-night—for if I do, there'll be no-

thing but lecturing and finding fault; and you are not a bit better than the rest! I don't know what possessed me to trouble my head about you or your affairs——"

Denzil was on the point of saying that he should be considerably obliged to him if he would not again take so much unnecessary trouble—but, before he could utter a word, his companion turned suddenly on his heel and left him; and, on looking back, he saw that he had joined two females, who had a few moments before passed them.

Vexed and disgusted at the excessive levity of his conduct, Denzil turned hastily away, and was proceeding on his route, when he suddenly recollected Charles's declaration that he would not go home at all—and fearful that, in his present mood, he might adhere to this determination, and thus involve himself in fresh trouble and disgrace, as well as give additional uneasiness to his family, he again retraced his steps, in the hope of persuading him to return home.

Charles did not, it appeared, observe that he had followed him; and as he approached, he heard him addressing the females with some common-place gallantry, to which the one who appeared the elder replied, in a reserved tone——

"Your attentions, sir, are very unpleasant—I expect every moment to meet my husband—and even if I did not, your offered protection is quite unnecessary."

"Oh, but I cannot think of allowing you to walk alone, at this time of the evening," replied Charles, "come, do pray let me prevail on you to take my arm!"—and he tried to force himself between the two females, who clung close together, to baffle his purpose.

"Charles," exclaimed Denzil, tapping him on the shoulder, "I want to speak with you."

"Oh, what you knew better, then, than to go to your solitary home?" exclaimed Charles, "well, for once, I give you credit for your discernment — These ladies are friends of mine—come, I'll have the pleasure of introducing you."

"Pray, Mr. Levison, let us pass!" exclaimed the female who had before spoken, "you well know that your nonsense has before been the cause of——"

"I know your husband is a foolish, jealous-pated monkey!" he replied, interrupting her. "But come, let me introduce Mr. Denzil Montgomery to you; and perhaps, then your pretty sister will not refuse to let him escort her—for he is as serious as even my friend Mackenzie could wish."

"Mr. Levison, this is shameful and cruel of you!" exclaimed both females. "Pray let us go on!"—for he was now standing before them, so that they could not pass.

"Charles, I insist you let the ladies proceed," said Denzil, angrily. "How can you be so unmanly as to annoy them, when——"

Before he could finish the sentence, Charles was felled to the earth by a blow from some one who came quickly up behind; and, almost at the same instant, Denzil received a violent blow in the face from another assailant.

More collected, however, than Charles, he contrived to keep his feet, though the force of the blow made him stagger some paces backward.

Imagining, in the confusion of the moment, that they were assaulted by street-robbers, Denzil, as he rushed

upon the man who had struck him, called loudly for assistance; but he was soon undeceived, and enabled to comprehend the cause of the attack—for the exclamations of the two females, after their first shriek of terror, betrayed that it was the husband who had been spoken of, accompanied by a friend, who, it appeared, was equally interested, being the betrothed of the other female.

It was in vain, however, that he attempted to explain to them that, in reality, nothing had occurred, which could warrant such violence—that he had himself not even spoken to the females—and that Charles, who was now lying quite insensible, though he had done wrong, perhaps, in pertinaciously insisting on accompanying the ladies—

"Yes, yes, I dare say—you can, of course, tell a fine story," interrupted the husband, whom Denzil now recognised as a tradesmen with whom Mr. Levison had dealt, and whose shop he (Denzil) had frequently visited with Charles, though he had never then suspected that the latter had any sinister motive in lounging in Mackenzie's shop, and gossiping with his pretty wife and sister.

Even at the present moment, indeed, he was far from suspecting that Mackenzie had any serious cause for the resentment he had betrayed; and, vexed at the insolent tone in which the latter had replied, he angrily observed,

"I consider you now, Mr. Mackenzie, as unworthy of receiving any explanation from me, and you may depend upon it you shall hear further of this unprovoked violence."

With the assistance of some of the by-standers, whom the affray had collected, Charles was by this time on his feet, and he now began, in no very measured terms, to

abuse his assailant, whom he designated a jealous-pated fool, adding,

"If your wife were not present to protect you, I would give you, what you richly deserve, a sound thrashing!"

Again Mackenzie, disregarding the screams and entreaties of the females, rushed at his antagonist, who now more on his guard, somewhat sobered by the blow he had received, and possessing more personal strength than the former, stood prepared to meet him, and returned the blow. Several hits were now quickly exchanged, in spite of Denzil's determined interposition and remonstrances, before the watch, who had been called together by the uproar, came to the spot; and then it was with considerable difficulty the combatants were overpowered by the official preservers of the peace.

It was in vain that Denzil, who, though greatly irritated by what he considered the unpardonable violence of Mackenzie and his friend, still wished to bring the affair to an amicable conclusion—in vain that he endeavoured to persuade the guardians of the night that the fray had originated in a mistake, and that the parties being known to each other, could settle it on the following morning, or any future time, without *their* assistance—they persisted that it was a breach of the peace, which could not be settled without the interference of a magistrate; and that the offending party must therefore be kept in safe hold, that is to say, in the watch-house, until the following morning. But who was the offending party? Charles, and of course Denzil, loudly declared that they had committed no breach of the peace, but had been shamefully assaulted by Mr. Mackenzie and his companion—a fact which was proved, not only by

the evidence of Denzil's swollen eye, and Charles's sundry bruises and dirted clothes, but by the spontaneous declaration of a man who had seen the first blows given; and on these proofs Mr. Mackenzie and his friend were about to be taken off by the watchmen, when the tables were turned by their vociferous protestations that Mr. Levison and his companion had drawn this upon them, by grossly insulting the two ladies, who were now, by tears and entreaties, endeavouring to procure the enlargement of their two champions. "It is false!" exclaimed Denzil, "I appeal to the ladies themselves!"—but alas, he soon found that he could not have made a more unfortunate appeal—for the two females, determined to rescue their relatives at any price, and anxious to save themselves from any blame in their eyes, immediately declared that they certainly had been insulted, and that it was not the first time by a good many that Mr. Levison had annoyed them.

"Yes, he has had the impudence," added the enraged husband, "even to intrude into my house, when he knew I was out of the way, and try to persuade my wife to elope with him, and even bribe my servant to bring his insulting letters to her; and now I've not a doubt he had got information that she and her sister were coming home from their mother's at Knightsbridge, and he and his companion there, who, I dare say, is no better than himself, waylaid them. And who can blame me for what I've done? But they are gentlemen, and I'm a tradesman, and they think they're to do as they please—but, thank heaven, I'm an Englishman, and I'll let them know that there's law for me, as well as for gentlefolks!"

This was appealing loudly to the feelings of those whom

curiosity had collected around them; and Denzil's observation, that he ought to have appealed to the law, and not have taken it into his own hands, was drowned in the plaudits of the crowd, at Mackenzie's proper display of spirit; and the watchmen, yielding to the popular feeling, released the grasp they had taken of the latter and his friend, and seemed upon the point of agreeing to leave the parties to settle it at another time, when some officious person suggested that Mr. Mackenzie ought to give charge of the two impudent rakes, and let a night's lodging in the watch-house teach them not to meddle with men's wives for the future.

Unfortunately, Charles, instead of taking no notice of this friendly advice, replied to it by some expressions of contempt, not only towards Mackenzie, but the "high and mighty" authority of the watchmen, who, of course, now considered their dignity compromised, and themselves involved in the dispute.

"Now, I'll just tell you what it is, my fine fellow," observed one of them, addressing Charles, and at the same time raising the staff of office, in a threatening manner, close to his face, "if so be as you don't *toddle* pretty quickly, I'll make you, without no more words."

"You're an impudent rascal!" exclaimed Charles, in a violent passion, "and, if you offer to touch me, I'll break your head for you!"

Denzil caught him by the arm, to drag him away; but the mischief was now done—Charles was charged with obstructing and insulting the officers of the night, and in a moment he was seized by the collar, by two of them, who attempted to drag him along; but Charles was now in no humour to submit quietly, and, after a few moments'

violent struggle, during which Denzil vainly attempted to pacify him, they all three came down together in the kennel, to the no small amusement of the mischievous part of the crowd, who were, as usual, most of them disposed to exult in the downfall of the guardians of the peace.

Denzil had until this moment acted, though fruitlessly, only as a pacificator; but he could no longer maintain his temper, when he beheld Charles receive several tremendous blows from the bludgeon of a third watchman, who came to the assistance of his fellows, and, without knowing or even inquiring what had been the matter, commence a furious attack upon Charles, who, being still held fast by the other two, was totally unable to ward off the blows which were showered upon his head and shoulders.

"What are you about, you rascal? Are you going to commit murder?" exclaimed Denzil, rushing upon him, and in an instant wrenching the staff from his hand, he threw it over the rails of the Park, close to which the affray had taken place; but this triumph was not of long duration, for several other watchmen had by this time arrived, and Denzil, who had never contemplated, even in thought, any breach of the peace, was now made prisoner, and dragged along with his companion, who had been by this time completely overpowered, to the watch-house.

Totally unused to such scenes, and making sure that, upon a proper representation of the case, to any person in authority, above the degree of the ignorant and furious wretches who had brought him thither, Denzil felt not the slightest uneasiness as to the final issue of the case;

but what was his astonishment and indignation, when the constable, before whom they were taken, after hearing a most exaggerated statement of violence from the watchmen, coolly told him, when he would have related the true story, that he (Denzil) might keep all that to tell the magistrate, before whom he should consider it his duty to send them both, in the morning.

"But you surely will not detain us here all night?" exclaimed Denzil, in surprise.

"You may depend upon it I shall," returned the officer, with great *nonchalance*, "unless you have two substantial housekeepers to produce, who will bail you."

"What can we do?" demanded Denzil, turning to Charles, who, half-stupified with the blows he had received, aided by the latent effects of the wine he had drunk, and his great personal exertions, had listened with great indifference to the statements of his violent conduct, which, both in his case and Denzil's, had been represented to have originated in their having grossly insulted and abused two respectable females whom they (the watchmen) had interfered to protect.—"What are we to do?" he repeated, "we must not remain in this horrible place all night."

"You should have thought of that before," observed the officer; "as it is, it is my duty to take care of you. Lock them up, Stevens."

All further remonstrance was prevented by their being both dragged away, and conducted to the lock-up cell, into which they were on the point of being roughly pushed, when Charles, who was much more *au fait* in such cases than his companion, contrived to stop this proceeding by insinuating a crown piece into the hand of the man who had hold of him.

"We don't like to be in the dark, all night, my good fellow," he observed, "and so just let us us go back to the other room, will you?"

"Well, I don't want to behave unhandsome," replied the fellow; "and, as you seem to be gentlemen, why, if you'll be quiet and peaceable, you see, you may as well sit by the fire, for all I know."

Heartily glad to be spared some hours' confinement in the small and dirty place which had struck him with horror at the first glance, Denzil readily gave the desired assurance of good behaviour, and they were allowed to return to the outer room, which was now cleared of all but the night-constable and his attendants.

Denzil, inexperienced as he was, was too quick-sighted not to perceive the vast revolution in his favour which the well-timed douceur of Charles had brought about, and now no longer withheld by delicacy from purchasing, by the same means, all the information he wanted, as to the course he should pursue, to avoid, if possible, the trouble and disgrace of appearing before a magistrate, he drew his purse from his pocket, and laying a guinea on the table, by which he was seated, desired the man to whom he had before spoken, to treat his companions with what they liked to take, and keep the rest himself.

"Well, I'm sure it's a great pity a gentleman like you, should be locked up for such a trifle," he observed. "Why, in the name of wonder, didn't you make it up with the Charlies, before they gave the charge against you?—A few shillings among them, would have healed all their wounds and bruises, and you might have gone home quiet and comfortable.'"

"They should have had my heart's blood first!" ex-

claimed Charles, with vehemence, "the insolent scoundrels!"

Denzil, too, was indignant at the idea of paying the fellows who had acted with such arbitrary violence—but, if there were any other means of procuring their liberty—

"Why, you see, if you know anybody hereabouts, that would come and be answerable for you—I can't go myself—but I can find a man, I dare say, that'll go for a trifle, and let 'em know—or, if you'll write a note, he can take it."

The materials for writing were placed before them, and Denzil, after a few minutes' consideration, addressed a few lines to Mr. Dormer, in which he stated his situation, and begged of him to devise some means of releasing him from it, without letting Earl Raeburn know what had happened.

Another bribe secured a messenger, and in a short time two respectable tradesmen in the neighbourhood presented themselves to answer for the appearance of Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Levison, to meet any charge that might be preferred against them, and they were allowed to depart.

The anxiety and confusion attendant on the novel circumstances in which he had been placed, had hitherto prevented Denzil's reflecting much on the cause of all that had happened; but when he at length found himself freed from a scene so abhorrent to his feelings at all times, but especially so at the present moment—when his mind was occupied with subjects of such mournful interest—he could not help angrily reprehending Charles's levity, when, as they were on the point of parting, the latter observed that he would now annoy that impudent, jealous

Charles, that's got such a nice, good-humoured, pretty creature of your own——"

"But tell me, Thomas," interrupted Denzil, in astonishment and alarm, "surely they did not dare say I was guilty of——"

"Why, I don't know exactly what was said," Mr. Denzil, replied the old man, gravely; "but this I do know—that master sets it down that you're much the worst of the two—because, as he said, what business could you have to be strolling about with Mr. Charles, considering what's but just happened—and besides, I know old Mackenzie said that you had often been with Mr. Charles at his shop, and that you came to draw his son off, that Mr. Charles might have an opportunity of talking to his son's wife; and that no doubt your purpose to-night was to draw off the young sister."

"A pretty plan they've given us credit for," exclaimed Charles, bursting into a fit of laughter, while Denzil, in a transport of indignation, sorrow, and shame, could only utter—

"And Fanny heard all this, too, asserted of me?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Denzil, I'm sorry to say she did—and she took it to heart, too—and I'm sure she needn't have any thing now to vex her, for she has suffered enough, gracious knows," said old Thomas.

"Well, I'm in a pretty scrape," observed Charles, after a few moments' reflection, "what would you advise me to do, Denzil?"

"I am afraid my advice, Charles, is of little consequence to you—or neither you nor I should be suffering as we now are; but, I trust, to-morrow will explain, at least, how far I deserve to be included in——"

"Oh, no—it's all me, of course! I wonder when it was ever otherwise!—that Mr. Denzil Montgomery was perfectly immaculate, and Charles Levison the scapegoat for all offences!" returned the latter, angrily.

"We will not discuss that point now," returned Denzil; "good night—I shall go home, however you decide."

With a heart agonised with a thousand contending emotions, he retraced his way back to Brompton, forgetting that Mr. Dormer had sent him a message by one of his bail that he had better go to his (Mr. Dormer's) house for the night, than think of returning to Brompton.

Totally regardless of the hurts he had received, he was upon the point of dismissing Ned, intending to pay a parting visit to the chamber of death, when the exclamation of the former, as he raised his half-closed eyes to his master's face, recalled to his recollection the circumstances which were beginning already to give place to thoughts and feelings of a very different nature.

"I have been involved in a quarrel, Ned, through the folly of another," he observed, without entering into explanation; "but a little cold water and rest will make me look less formidable, I hope, in the morning."

"I'm afeard I can give a pretty good guess what's been the matter," observed Ned, with a sagacious look.

"Can you indeed, Ned?" replied his master; "you must be clever, if you can."

"Why, then, I'se tell you, sir," returned Ned, "you've met with one as you've had no occasion to like nor to love——"

"You speak in riddles, Ned! do pray tell me, plainly, whom you mean?" interrupted Denzil, impatiently.

"Well, then, it is Mr. Delaney, as he calls himself," replied Ned.

"Delaney!" repeated Denzil, "why should you think so?"

"Because I've seen him," said Ned, "more than once sin' we've been here; and, moreover, he left a letter directed to one that'll never read it now, poor thing! It was left yesterday morning, just after she started in the coach that I fetched her—little did I think, when I helped her into it——"

"But the letter, Ned," interrupted his master, greatly affected at the tone of natural feeling in which the simple lad uttered his regret, "why did you not give it to me before?"

"I may as well tell the truth at once," returned Ned; "I guessed there was no good in it, for the poor lady herself charged me, when he first called here, two days ago, not to let you know that he had been."

"And did my mother, then, see him?" demanded Denzil, in astonishment.

"No," replied Ned, "she was not up; and I guess he wanted money, for he wrote a few words on a slip of paper, and sent it up by Sarah; and presently she came down, and gave him some money wrapped up and sealed, but never a word of writing to it—for Sarah told me her poor mistress tried to write, but her hand trembled so, she could not hold a pen. He didn't open the paper while he was here, but Sarah told me she saw her mistress fold ten guineas in it, and she was told to say to him that her mistress could do no more at present. He made no answer, but yesterday he called again—and, when I said she was gone out, he looked as if he didn't believe it, and then he told me to give her that letter—but not to let you see it. I had a great mind to refuse it, and tell him there could be no good in it, if you wasn't to see it—but he walked

off in a great hurry, and I put the letter away, intending to—but no matter, it can do no harm for you to see it now, if it's he that's been the cause of——"

"No, no—I know nothing of him, Ned, I assure you," returned his master.

The letter was produced, and Denzil, with mingled indignation and horror, read the following lines, which were directed

"*To Mrs. Montgomery.*

"ELINOR,

"When I humbled myself to request of you the loan of fifty pounds, to enable your aunt and myself to proceed to Ireland, I little thought you would insult me by sending the sum you did, with the declaration, (which I know to be false,) that you could do no more. I tell you candidly, at once, that you know I am in possession of secrets which your son and yourself would be glad to bury for ever in oblivion—but which shall certainly be revealed, in full daylight, unless you send me what I require. You must be very conscious that, though twenty years or more have passed since, it is not yet too late to bring forward the *woman* for whose apprehension, if I recollect aright, a hundred pounds' reward was offered! I think, therefore, I am very moderate, when I promise that, if the sum of fifty pounds is brought forward when I call for it, which will be to-morrow, (if I can ascertain that you are alone) you shall never hear any more on the subject from

"DENNIS DELANEY."

"Wretch! monster!" exclaimed Denzil, as he crushed the vile scrawl, with the intention of throwing it behind the fire, "the hand of Heaven has defeated your vile purpose! Your intended victim is beyond the reach of your persecutions and artifice!"

"I suppose, sir," said Ned, as he left the room, "if he should come again, you would not wish to see him?"

"Certainly not," returned Denzil, "I have seen quite enough—too much of them all, Ned."

"Ah, then, I'm right, after all! It was some of the set, that you met with, to-night?" observed Ned.

Denzil saw that poor Ned would not go to bed satisfied, unless he heard how it came about that he had returned in such a state, and he therefore replied——

"You are mistaken, my good lad,—it is in consequence of interfering to save Mr. Charles Levison from the effects of his folly, that I got into this fray—but it was not at all connected with those people."

"Mr Charles!" repeated Ned. "Ah, I'd quite forgot to tell you that Mr. Delaney asked me if I could give him Mr. Charles Levison's direction in town, but I said I knew nothing about it."

"That was perfectly right!" replied his master, his heart thrilling with indignation, at this further proof of Delaney's cupidity; for what could he want with Charles, but to endeavour to make him subservient to his views.

Determined to put Charles on his guard against this wretched and unprincipled man, he resolved not to destroy the note which the latter had addressed to his mother, as he had at first intended; and, having dismissed his servant, he retired, to try to forget for a few hours the feverish scenes in which he had been engaged.

CHAPTER XXIX.

> I confess to have fail'd—
> Fortune is female: from my youth her favours
> Were not withheld—the fault was mine, to hope
> Her former smiles again at this late hour.
>
> BYRON.

PUNCTUAL to the hour appointed, Denzil drove up in a hackney coach to the public office in Marlborough-street, where he found Mr. Dormer, and a gentleman whom he introduced as his solicitor, already waiting. Though convinced, in his own mind, that there was no necessity for this, Denzil could not but feel extremely grateful for this proof of attention and friendship on the part of Mr. Dormer, to whom he now, as briefly as possible, explained all that had taken place on the preceding evening.

"I am very happy to find it is nothing worse," observed Mr. Dormer. "Do not mistake me, Denzil—I did not mistrust you, but I was fearful that Charles—but here he comes, and by his looks seems to have already pretty well paid the penalty of his folly."

Charles, indeed, looked most pitiably—for, in addition to the marks of the blows he had received, the feverish effects of the liquor he had taken were very evident in his appearance; indeed, the depression of spirits he displayed was so unusual to him, that Denzil could scarcely be persuaded but that some additional cause existed for it.

"They are all well, I hope, at home?" he observed, speaking in a low voice, while Mr. Dormer's attention

was attracted another way, by a crowd which was forcing into the office, accompanying some one charged with a criminal offence.

"Faith, I don't know any thing about them," replied Charles, "for I never went home, after all."

"Good heavens! where, then, have you passed the night?" exclaimed Denzil.

"Oh, do not ask me," he replied, impatiently; "it was all your fault, or I should have been with you at Brompton, and have saved——"

"We are likely, I am afraid, to be detained here some time," observed Mr. Dormer, who rejoined them at this moment, having been drawn away to inquire the cause of the great bustle and rush into the office. "It is well," he continued, "if we have not to stay in this horrible place an hour or two longer—for I understand the prisoner who has just been brought into the office, is charged with an attempt to murder in a gambling house, and there will be, perhaps, a long examination."

Denzil would have persuaded him to leave them, and return home at once; but Mr. Dormer was too anxious to see the business settled, especially as Mackenzie and his wife and sister were now present, evidently with the intention of preferring some charge, or abetting the complaints of the watchmen.

Charles had seated himself on a bench behind, and Denzil, as he turned to speak to him, was struck with surprise at the look of consternation and affright which was visible in his countenance——

"What is the matter, Charles?" he exclaimed, "surely, the appearance of those people does not alarm you! They can——"

"No, no," interrupted Charles, "I was not thinking of them, but of one——Denzil, did you not see the person who was taken in there," pointing to the inner office,—"as a prisoner just now?"

"No," replied Denzil, in amazement, "I saw the crowd—but my attention was called away—but why do you ask? do you know—"

"Yes, I do!" he interrupted, "until day-light this morning I was in his company, and now I behold him charged as a murderer!"

"Merciful Heaven! to what dangers do you expose yourself, Charles!" exclaimed Denzil. "Then you were in a gaming house all night?"

"Yes, but I will never enter one again!" he replied. "I was vexed and mad at your leaving me last night," he continued, "and, just at that moment, a fellow that I knew accosted me—I was ripe for any mischief, and, having contrived to give old Thomas the slip, I accompanied my acquaintance to a house in Bury-street, where I had several times before met him. I did not mean to play, but merely to look on; Browning, however, tormented me into it at last, and I won fifty pounds in the first hour; but after that—but that was not what I was going to tell you," he added, suddenly recollecting himself, "the person that is now in that room as a prisoner was seated by me—but I should not perhaps have noticed him so particularly, but that I heard him called by a name which both you and I have reason to remember; and, indeed, I was on the point of asking him, two or three times, some questions that should satisfy me whether he was the same Delaney that——"

"Delaney! gracious heavens, can it be possible!" exclaimed Denzil.

"Nay, I do not know that it is him—only it seemed probable; and I thought, too, I could trace a faint likeness;—but you can soon satisfy yourself, and hear the particulars, if you like to go into the office."

Denzil did not wait a second intimation, but pushing his way through the crowd, he reached the officer who guarded the door; and, by the douceur of half-a-crown, was accommodated with a place where he could have a full view of the prisoner, who was at this moment placed at the bar.

A single glance was sufficient—it was indeed Delaney; and Denzil felt horror-struck, almost to fainting, as he beheld the well-known countenance, which he had once thought an index only of kind and manly and liberal feelings; but in which now were apparent only the hypocrisy and artifice of the hardened villain, struggling to conceal, under assumed calmness and lofty demeanor, the consciousness of guilt and the fear of its punishment.

Most willingly would Denzil have retreated—but it was now impossible for him to move from the spot; for every one was crowding forward to obtain a sight of the person charged with such an awful crime as murder, and he was compelled to remain during the examination of the witnesses.

Delaney had, it appeared, won a large sum of money, and was about to quit the table, when he was charged by one of the losers with having cheated him, and with having at that moment false dice, which he had secreted in his sleeve. The former, of course, denied the charge;

but his opponent, who had lost considerably, was not to be satisfied with mere words; and, finding Delaney resolutely determined on carrying off his winnings, he sprang across the table and seized him by the collar, declaring he should not stir till he had refunded the whole of his ill-gotten gains.

A violent scuffle had ensued, and Delaney, at length, finding himself likely to be overpowered, drew a knife from his pocket, and stabbed the man who held him in the side, and then retreated towards the staircase backwards, declaring he would sacrifice any one who attempted to lay hands on him; but, it seemed, he was not aware that the porter, who had been called up to assist, was at that moment behind him, and he was instantly knocked down and the knife secured.

The person who was wounded, was represented to be in a very dangerous state, and unable to attend.

Delaney listened to the evidence with the most intense earnestness; and, when it was concluded, addressed the magistrate with apparent ease and calmness.

He declared that he was a person of respectable character and connexions—that he had been accidentally introduced to the house in which the sad affray had taken place—that, so far from having won any considerable sum, he had been on the whole a loser, during the evening: that it was true he had a large sum in his possession, which he had foolishly carried in with him, and that when the person who attacked him accused him of what he knew to be false, he considered it a premeditated plan to rob him, and had therefore, to defend himself, employed the knife, which he did not use until he was actually thrown down, and nearly strangled, while resist-

ing the attempt to take his money, which he considered he had a right to defend.

He was in the act of concluding by another vaunting boast of his unblemished character for honour and integrity, to which, he said, he could bring more than a hundred noblemen and gentlemen to testify, but that he had been in England only a few days—when his eye suddenly rested on Denzil's countenance, and he started, turned pale, and became silent for some moments—then added, "There is a gentleman, I now see, in court,—a gentleman of high character and probity, who will, I am sure, cheerfully confirm the account I have given of myself. He has known me and my family for a considerable period, both in England and on the Continent, where I have left them, intending to return immediately, and remain there for life."

All eyes were instantly turned on Denzil, who was pointed out to observation by the courteous bow with which Delaney greeted him; and at this moment a man, who was near the magistrate, whispered something to him.

"Your reference appears rather unfortunate," remarked the latter, addressing the prisoner; "for, I understand, the gentleman of 'high honour and probity,' whom you have called upon, is himself a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" repeated Delaney, with a look of demoniac malice, which proved that, in the gratification the discovery gave him, he had forgotten the evil effect it might have on his own case.

Denzil impetuously pressed forward—he was about to utter a vindication of himself—to assert that he was, in fact, the injured party, and that the magistrate had no

right to cast a slur upon him, from the circumstance of his having been, as would be seen, unjustly accused;—but he was instantly silenced by the orders of the magistrate, who peremptorily observed that it would be quite time enough for him (Denzil) to speak, when it came to his turn.

Boiling with indignation at what he considered unjustifiable insult, and compelled to endure the laugh and significant whispers of the crowd by whom he was surrounded, Denzil scarcely comprehended the remainder of Delaney's examination; and it was not until the latter was led away in the custody of an officer, that his anxiety returned to know what was the termination.

"He is remanded," whispered the officer, of whom Denzil eagerly inquired the result; "but, come, you are the next, and mind, now, what you are about—for he's well known as a regular gambler, and it won't do you any good that he has claimed acquaintance with you."

Denzil had no time to reply, for he now found himself, together with Charles, hustled forward to the spot which Delaney had just been removed from.

Good heavens, was it possible that he, without having committed the shadow of an offence, was thus to be degraded! But he had little time to reflect—for the witnesses against them were already arrayed, and he heard, with indignation and astonishment, a tale repeated by the first watchman, in which there was scarcely a word of truth, and by which both he and Charles were represented as having committed a gross outrage upon two defenceless females;—that the husband of one of them, and a friend, having come to their rescue, they had been knocked down and otherwise grievously ill-treated, and that they (the watchmen) upon attempting to take the

offenders into custody, had been also violently assaulted and beaten.

With difficulty Denzil restrained himself to hear this outrageous misrepresentation to the end—but again he was silenced with a peremptory "It is not your turn yet to speak," from the magistrate, while Mackenzie stepped forward to confirm the tale of the watchmen; but though very evidently disposed to make the most of the story that he could, he was not prepared to go the lengths that the watchmen had done. On the contrary, his complaints were chiefly of the former annoyance he had suffered from Mr. Levison's determined pursuit of his wife—he said that he believed he had struck the first blow on this occasion; and, in short, by degrees, Mr. Turner (the solicitor whom Mr. Dormer had brought) elicited from him the whole truth, that he and his friend had commenced the assault on both parties, and that he had no other reason to suppose his wife and her sister insulted, than having seen Mr. Levison walking by their side, and Mr. Montgomery behind them.

At Mr. Turner's desire, the wife and her sister were now brought forward, and with reluctance compelled to admit the truth, that no insult had been offered, except by Mr. Levison's insisting on seeing them home; and that Mr. Montgomery had not even spoken to them, but had endeavoured to dissuade his companion from forcing himself into their company.

Though thus cleared from the worst part of the charge (as the magistrate avowed) there yet remained the sundry blows and bruises which the watchmen pretended to have received in the affray; and to these, Denzil, who was at length allowed to speak, could only allege the unpro-

voked ill-treatment which himself and his companion had met with, from these worthy guardians of the peace; in proof of which he adduced Mr. Levison's disfigured face, as well as his own; which, though of less formidable appearance, still bore pretty strong marks of the violence used against them.

"Did the prisoners appear to have been drinking?" demanded the magistrate.

"Oh, yes, your worship, they were quite entirely *intosticated*," was the ready reply.

"Well, then, you are fined five shillings for drunkenness—and, for the charge of assault, you may settle it, if you can, with these men, to whom you ought to have surrendered yourselves without resistance, and who must be protected in their duty. If they are not willing to settle it, I shall bind you to appear at the sessions."

Denzil would have expostulated—he would have exclaimed against the slander of accusing him of drunkenness, and protested he would never acknowledge its justice by paying the fine; but the purse-strings of Charles were already undrawn, another case was called on, and he was hustled from the bar, before he could utter a word, and found himself in the outer office, along with his companion and the watchmen, who said that they were "very willing to settle it with the *gemmen*, *perwided* the *gemmen* would behave handsome, like *gemmen*, and make amends for——"

"You are a set of false-swearing vagabonds!" exclaimed the enraged Denzil; "and, unless you will publicly acknowledge that you have shamefully mis-represented my conduct altogether——"

"Psha! what matters it, what such fellows say of us?"

interrupted Charles, pushing him aside. "Come here, my hearties, and let you and I see how we can settle this matter. Let us hear now, first, how much you'll have the conscience to expect for that black eye, Pat, which I suppose is at least a week old, though you swore I gave it you last night!"

"Faith, then, *iv* ye didn't, it wasn't your fault, yere honour," replied the watchman, "for ye laid about ye in as pretty style as I'd wish to see, considering your honour's but a light weight, an' had got rather too much of the *cratur*. Indeed, then, it isn't myself that would like to take such another *bating*, for five pounds."

"Five pounds! five shillings, you mean, Paddy?" said Charles, who was evidently not displeased at the compliment to his prowess, which the sly Irishman had insinuated under the form of rebuke.

"Indeed, then, I *mane* no such thing," returned the latter, "an' I'd be sorry to disgrace your honour so much as to think ye meant it, either. There's three *ov* us, you see, an when we come to divide——"

"Give them their demand, and let us get out of this disgraceful scene," observed Denzil; "if we are obliged to pay these fellows for their villany, do it at once," and he put his purse into Charles's hand.

"Och, sure, then, there's no compulsion to pay anything," observed the watchman, "an' so, *iv* your honour likes better, we'll just go back an' ye can put in bail——"

"Psha, come this way, we'll settle it without him," observed Charles, drawing them aside.

In a few moments he returned to say that it was all arranged, and nothing remained but to go before the magistrate and get their discharge.

Again!—must he again be subjected to the mortification of appearing as a culprit!—but it was of no avail that Denzil gave vent to his indignation, Charles assured him that it was all folly to be so disturbed at what was an every-day occurrence, and Mr. Dormer and his solicitor both seconded the assurance; yet, in spite of them all, Denzil's cheeks were crimsoned with anger and vexation, when he again entered the office, and, in spite of Charles's remonstrances, he was about to utter an indignant reply to the reprimand which the self-sufficient magistrate chose gratuitously to annex to the order he gave for their discharge, when he was suddenly arrested in his purpose, by encountering the angry glance of Mr. Levison the elder, who had, it appeared, at that moment entered the office.

Denzil's voice faltered, and the sentence died unfinished on his lips; while Charles, who also had discovered his uncle, but pretended not to have done so, tried, by hastily pushing his way through the crowd to the back of the bar, to avoid the meeting with him.

Mr. Levison, however, aware it seemed of his purpose, contrived to be at the door at the moment he was about to pass through, followed by Denzil.

"Do not alarm yourself, sir," observed the old gentleman, "I am not come to interrupt your pleasures, Mr. Charles Levison, nor intrude myself upon you! You would not have seen me here, sir, but that a report had reached St. James's Place, that a murder had been committed in the house where you spent your night, and the poor unfortunate girl who has the misfortune to call you husband——"

"Well, well, uncle," interrupted Charles.

"Don't call me uncle, sir! I disclaim you! I'll have nothing to do with you! I was in hopes that I should see you in the road to the gallows, sir, or I would not have come here!" exclaimed the old gentleman, who had worked himself into a violent fit of passion—"but I want nothing to do with you! I have done with you for ever!"

Mr. Dormer, who at that moment came forward, attempted now to address his old friend, but the latter indignantly repulsed him—

"I want nothing to say to you, Mr. Dormer," he angrily observed, "you may act as you please, and so will I!"—and without waiting for a reply, he hastened to his carriage, which was waiting at the door for him, and drove off without having condescended to take the slightest notice of Denzil, who, too much agitated to speak, had only endeavoured to conciliate him by a respectful bow.

"Well, I am in a pretty hobble, that is certain!" said Charles, as he took Denzil's arm, and followed Mr. Dormer out of the office; "and that grinning monkey, the upholsterer, too, was close behind, listening to all my uncle said. If we had been any where else but where we were, I would have knocked the fellow down!"

Denzil, however, was deaf to all his complaints—for he thought, at that moment, only of the look of utter indifference and contempt with which Mr. Levison, senior, had received his salutation; and all other evils were forgotten in the chilling conviction that it seemed to convey to his bosom.

"And Fanny, too," he observed, unconscious that he was speaking aloud, "will hear of me as a participator in

this disgraceful scene—and at such a moment, too! Good heavens, what an evil destiny seems ever to rise up between me and——"

"Psha, nonsense!" interrupted Charles; "what a novice you are, to make such a serious matter of what, after all, is a mere trifle! No girl will think the worse of her lover, for getting into a *row*, and that's all that can be said of you, at last,—besides, I'll explain it all to Fanny, the first opportunity, and tell her you were not to blame."

Vexed with himself for having betrayed the subject of his reflexions, to one so little capable of participating in his feelings, Denzil made no reply to this elegant exordium; and Mr. Dormer having concluded his conversation with the solicitor, who had taken his leave, now turned back and joined them.

Charles, however, though he affected to carry all off with great *nonchalance*, as a mere trifle, shrank abashed from Mr. Dormer's cool and cutting remarks upon his conduct during the last twenty-four hours.

"And pray, Mr. Levison," continued the former, "if I may presume to question one who appears so determined to reject the advice and assistance of a friend—what do you now intend to do with yourself? Your uncle's doors, it seems likely, are again closed upon you, and——"

"There is only one thing I can do," interrupted Charles, petulantly, "and that will be, to seek my last habitation in the Serpentine—for the whole world seems set against me!"

"There is no one set against you, but your own folly!" returned Mr. Dormer, in a gentle tone.

"I don't know but that other people have quite as much right to be blamed for folly, as I have," replied the incorrigible Charles. "I'm sure my uncle fairly drove me out yesterday, by his storming, and raving, and lamenting over the disappointment of his hopes and his projects. Even poor aunt Rachel could not help quarrelling with him; and as to Fanny, she dared not show her face, for he was ready to knock her down, because he said he could read secret joy in her heart, at having escaped being a countess, which he swears she shall be, or nothing."

"He is an old ——, but no matter," continued Mr. Dormer, suppressing a smile: "his temper is a poor excuse for your ruining yourself, and driving every body mad that has the misfortune to be connected with you!"

It was not until Denzil was actually in the room in which the Earl of Raeburn was sitting with Miss Somerville, that he recollected that his visit was totally unexpected by the former; and that both his own appearance, and that of his companion, would render a disclosure of the last night's events unavoidable.

He had not, indeed, when he mechanically took the road with Mr. Dormer, reflected whither it would lead him; and, when he suddenly started from his reverie, on arriving at Mr. Dormer's door, the latter would not allow him to depart.

Denzil had, in fact, seen that which had escaped both Charles and Mr. Dormer, but which had effectually banished all other thoughts or recollections from his mind.

In the carriage, which had been waiting a few yards from the police office-door, and to which Mr. Levison had hurried with the greatest celerity, after his short but

severe address to his nephew—two females were seated, who were evidently awaiting the old gentleman's return with great anxiety and impatience; and, though they beheld him come out of the office, followed by Charles and Denzil, the latter had recognised Fanny, and saw, too, that the recognition was mutual. A deep blush indeed had dyed the pallid cheek which he gazed on so intently, and he saw that, as the carriage turned the corner, again her eyes were fixed on him; but she instantly drew a thick black veil over her face, and it was that action which had effaced the transport he had felt at beholding her. He fancied there was scorn, contempt, aversion, in the manner in which she had concealed her features from his ardent gaze; and yet, in the first transient glance, he had thought very differently—he had caught the expression of her radiant eyes, and he believed—he was sure—they beamed on him with pleasure!

It was these contrary feelings, fears, and doubts, which had so wholly engrossed him until this moment, that he was entirely unprepared for the expressions of alarm and amazement with which he was greeted by both the Earl and Miss Somerville.

"It is all my fault, all my doing," said Charles, in a tone of mingled vexation and sorrow, which seemed at once to have the effect of disarming Mr. Dormer's resentment, and prevented all farther enquiries on the part of Earl Raeburn, in the presence of the former; who, however, far from shrinking from the avowal of his folly, soon left little to be told, except the first cause of "the row," as he elegantly styled it, in which he had contrived to involve his companion.

Hurt and vexed as the Earl and Mr. Dormer both

were, at the mortification to which Denzil had been exposed, they were little disposed to pity the offender, or sympathize in the uneasiness he betrayed, as to the result with his uncle.

But to Denzil there appeared much more in Charles's manner than mere sorrow and repentance for his folly. He had, it was true, seen him before suffer extreme depression, and had heard him utter similar expressions of self-condemnation, which had been as speedily effaced by the first temptation; but there was now a wildness in his look, and a restlessness of manner, which was evidently the result of great mental excitation—much greater, indeed, than Denzil thought it possible for him to feel, unless there were some deeper cause than was apparent.

"You did not tell me, after all," he observed, "whether the person charged———"

"It was the same," said Denzil, desirous of preventing his saying any more on the subject, which, he knew, could not fail to shock both the Earl and Mr. Dormer.

"Good heavens! it was Delaney, then!" repeated Charles, who evidently did not comprehend Denzil's wish to say no more. "His race is run, then—for I heard one of the officers say, he would be sure to be hung—there was not a chance for him!"

An explanation was now inevitable, and increased still more the gloom and depression under which all were labouring.

"I believe he was not the only one there," observed Charles, suddenly, after a long pause, during which each had been meditating, probably, on the same subject—"I believe," he repeated, "he was not the only rascal in the room."

"I am sure he was not," observed Mr. Dormer, drily.

Charles rose and paced the room, as if writhing under the remark, which he felt he but too well deserved.

"Where do you sleep to-night, Denzil?" he observed, stopping suddenly before the latter.

"At Brompton, of course," returned Denzil.

"Well, then, you will give me shelter with you for to-night—will you not?"

"Certainly," replied Denzil, alarmed at the strange wildness and incoherence of his look and manner.

"I hope Denzil does not mean to walk there again," observed Mr. Dormer, significantly.

"No," returned Charles, without seeming to comprehend the insinuation, "I cannot walk—indeed, I feel too, too unwell!"—And he threw himself into a chair, and put his hand to his forehead.

"I fear you are very unwell, Charles," said Denzil, anxiously.

Mr. Dormer was now roused into more attentive observation of him.

"You will be my guest for to-night, young man," he observed; "you are not fit to go so far."

"Oh, yes, yes, I am!" he replied, hastily starting up. "I must go—I want to talk to Denzil—he is the only one who can feel for me—who will——yes, yes, I must go! We will go at once, shall we not?"

"You must wait at any rate, until a coach can be got," said Mr. Dormer, and he rang the bell for a servant to procure one.

Charles silently acquiesced, nor did he utter another word, until its arrival was announced.

"God bless you, Rosa!" he exclaimed, starting up, and taking both the hands of Miss Somerville.

"Good heavens, Mr. Levison! you are in a high fever!" she exclaimed, shrinking from his burning touch. "Indeed, you had better remain here."

"No, no," he replied, in a hurried tone, "I shall be better for the air! Good night to you all," and, without waiting for any farther remonstrance, he rushed down stairs, and was seated in the coach, before Denzil reached the door.

"Denzil," he observed, as soon as they were in motion, "to no living creature but yourself would I acknowledge what I am going to tell you! Well, indeed, might Mr. Dormer apply to me that epithet which I bestowed on Delaney to-night—but even he did not suspect how grossly I have——"

"You have been foolish and thoughtless, Charles," interrupted Denzil, "but you now see the effect of your errors, and, I trust, this will be the last."

"It will be the last!" muttered Charles, with peculiar emphasis; "but, listen now to what I am going to tell you—you know that I was in that cursed gambling house last night, but you do not know all that it led to. I had but a few pounds in my pocket—I ventured them, and won considerably. There was a person came in, I think, with Delaney; the man I had won of, would not play any more—he was, in fact, cleared out—but this man, this new comer, challenged me, and I sat down again. He won all that I had in my possession, and more—for, when I rose up from the table, I found I was indebted to him two hundred pounds. 'You can give me a check on your banker,' he observed. As my evil genius would

have it, I had a checque in my pocket for twenty pounds, which my uncle had given me in the morning—the alteration of 20 to 200 was easy, and——"

"Surely, surely, you were not so mad, so——" Denzil paused, in breathless agitation.

"Yes, I did do it," replied Charles, in a subdued tone. "He knew me to be Charles Levison, and therefore had no suspicions but that all was right, and, indeed, I scarcely then reflected on the consequences which might —but I see it all now! My uncle's stern rejection of me to-day, struck terror into my heart! Should there be a suspicion when the checque is presented—should there be any investigation, I am lost!"

"Charles—there is but one way left to save yourself from disgrace!" exclaimed Denzil, after a moment's reflection, "Go, instantly—now, this moment, to your uncle, and avow the truth—throw yourself on his mercy! You are certain of succeeding—his pride itself will induce him, if forewarned, to avoid doing anything that may involve you. Let me," he continued, seizing the check-string, "order the man to drive to St. James's Place."

Charles was silent, and Denzil gave the necessary order.

"I will wait the result," observed the latter, when they arrived at the corner. "You can get out here; and if you do not return in an hour, I shall conclude that all is settled, and that you are once more restored to your home."

Charles seemed scarcely to attend to what he said, but, with an air of utter abstraction, obeyed the directions

of the agitated Denzil, who, from the coach window, watched him until he saw him admitted, and the door closed.

A quarter of an hour elapsed without his return, and Denzil began to hope that the measure he had advised had succeeded, when suddenly he beheld the hall-door opened, and two or three of the servants ran into the street, in evident alarm and confusion.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Denzil, forcing open the coach door, and jumping on to the pavement, at the moment one of them came running past.

"Oh, Mr. Denzil—my master, Mr. Charles!"

Denzil waited to hear no more, but rushed into the house—the door of which was left wide open, and the hall unattended.

The loud screams of female voices directed him at once to the drawing-room, and he rushed into the midst of the terrified group who were collected there.

On the ground Charles was extended, evidently in the agonies of death—and by his side knelt Rachel and Fanny, both endeavouring to stanch the blood that was flowing from his neck, while the other females loudly screamed for assistance, with the exception of the unfortunate wife, who had lost all consciousness of the horrid scene in happy insensibility. Motionless, and apparently speechless with terror, Mr. Levison sat in his usual place, as if he had been incapable of rising, while his eyes were fixed on the wretched victim of passion and dissipation, who had thus violently closed his thoughtless career.

Denzil stood for an instant horror-struck, and then, hastily throwing himself on his knees by the side of

Fanny, he endeavoured to second her efforts to stop the deluge of blood which was flowing, without uttering a word.

"It is useless—pray, pray, quit this scene!" he at length uttered, in a low voice.

Fanny looked eagerly in his face, as if only at that moment recognizing him, and then, making a vain attempt to rise, sank back fainting on the floor.

A surgeon at this moment arrived, but his assistance was useless to the immediate object of his attention—for Charles had ceased to breathe, before he entered the room.

"Can—can you save him? My boy—my poor boy!" exclaimed Mr. Levison, awaking out of the trance which seemed to have rendered him until this moment incapable of uttering a word.

The sound of his voice recalled Fanny to herself—she cast another shuddering look at the corpse, and then, hastily rising, threw herself into his arms and wept bitterly.

"Go to Emma, my dear," he observed, comprehending instantly the melancholy truth, that his nephew was past all human assistance. "Go to Emma—poor thing, she requires all your help."

"It will be better to remove her, before she recovers her recollection," said Denzil, hastily.

Mr. Levison started at the sound of his voice——

"Begone, sir, instantly!" he exclaimed, sternly. "How dare you intrude——"

"Father, dear father!" said Fanny, in a tone of entreaty, throwing her arms around his neck.

"Well, well, my child," he replied, "I will not now

say anything—this, indeed, is not a time for resentment —but I trust that Mr.———I know not now by what title I am to address him," looking at Denzil.

"By no other title, sir, than your benevolence bestowed upon me," exclaimed Denzil, with great agitation.

"Young man! young man!" returned Mr. Levison, "this will no longer impose upon me. I have but one favour to ask of you, in return for those which you are pleased to acknowledge having received at my hands; and that is, that you will leave us to our sorrows. They are, God knows, heavy enough!" and he hid his face on Fanny's neck, and sobbed bitterly.

"God of heaven! how have I deserved this?" exclaimed Denzil, rising from the side of the corpse, by which he had till this moment been kneeling. "Were I, indeed," he continued, with energy, "the most abandoned wretch on the face of the earth—with such an awful sight as this before my eyes—I should not dare dissemble or deny my guilt! But, having that before me, I do most solemnly deny that I have, by one voluntary act, forfeited that friendship—that esteem, which I once could boast."

"Brother, surely you will not let the poor boy go away in this despair!" said Miss Rachel, lifting her eyes, which had been hidden with her handkerchief, "we have reason enough already, Heaven knows, to repent being harsh and severe——"

"Aye, there—there—there!" interrupted Mr. Levison, in an agony of mingled grief and resentment, "I knew that I should be reproached as the cause of this—the world, too—the world will believe it—they will condemn my severity as the cause; and yet I did but what I thought my duty. Heaven knows my heart, I

meant not to act with harshness, though I threatened——"

"No, no, my dear, dear father—you have never been harsh—it is not your nature to be so," said Fanny, soothingly, "my aunt did not, could not mean——"

"I meant only that your father is wrong in driving Denzil away in such despair," observed the weeping Rachel. "I'm sure he looked as wild and as desperate, when he went out of the room, as ever that poor boy that lies there."

Fanny uttered a convulsive shriek—the dreadful thought that her aunt's words had presented to her imagination, completely annihilated the little fortitude she had summoned, to endeavour to comfort her father; and, no longer able to controul her feelings, she uttered the most piercing cries, invoking Denzil to return. In an instant, the latter, who had not yet quitted the house, was at her side, inquiring with agonized earnestness what had occasioned this fresh alarm.

"Nothing—nothing—but I am ill—I am weak," exclaimed Fanny, "and I cannot bear to see you leave us thus. My dear, dear father, for your poor Fanny's sake," and she took his hand and endeavoured to join it with Denzil's, which held her's in its trembling grasp.

"Well, well, my child, for your sake, and for his own, I consent to forgive all that has passed," said Mr. Levison.

"Forgive!" repeated Denzil, with unfeigned astonishment. "What have I done, sir, that such a term can be applicable——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Montgomery," exclaimed Doctor Rymer, the family physician, who now entered the room. "Pardon me, if I say, that, in the state of excitement all

are in at the present moment, it will be far better to waive all explanations and discussions. My good sir," he continued, going up to Mr. Levison, and taking his hand, "you must quit this room—and you, ladies, pray let me conduct you from this scene."

"Where is that poor girl?" said Mr. Levison, looking round for Emma, whom the servants had conveyed to her own room. "Oh, doctor, this is an awful sight!" he continued, "and it is me——"

"Oh, no, no," interrupted Denzil, eagerly, "Charles has been ill—frenzied, I may say, the whole day—the want of rest, the excitement, and perhaps the blows he received last night, together with the uneasiness of mind he was suffering, had thrown him into a state of delirium, long before he entered this house. During our ride hither, his whole conversation was so wild and incoherent, that I felt alarmed, though I never suspected——"

"Oh, no, no, who could have suspected—who could have thought," interrupted Mr. Levison, shuddering, "even when he drew the knife from his pocket—I thought it was but intended as an empty threat to intimidate me, for I believed that he was intoxicated. I knew not that the unsteady pace and incoherent manner, which I noticed from his first entrance, were the effects of illness. Yet it is a blessing to hear that it was so—that it was the act of delirium, rather than——"

"My dear sir, how could you for a moment doubt it?" interrupted Doctor Rymer. "I am myself a competent witness to prove it—for I saw the unfortunate young man, by accident, this very morning—and was so struck with the appearance of his eyes, that I told him, unless he took care of himself, he would have a serious attack, and

recommended him to return home and let me bleed him —but he would not consent."

Mr. Levison seemed considerably relieved by this information, though his countenance and manner still betrayed great mental anguish; and the doctor at length succeeded in persuading him to quit the mournful scene.

"No, no, young lady," he exclaimed, "I will assist your papa—you want help yourself—take Mr. Montgomery's arm, and——"

"Mr. Levison had better lean on me, sir, too," said Denzil, trembling, and not daring to profit by the opportunity offered him.

Mr. Levison silently took his proffered arm—but he had not advanced many paces, before he burst into tears.

"How short the time is," he observed, "since I used to lean on his arm and yours, and feel so proud of the two props of my old age, and now——"

"My dear sir, you have still two," interrupted the good-natured doctor, "Miss Levison will soon, I trust, be able to take my place, and Mr. Montgomery will be always——"

"No, no, Mr. Montgomery, or rather Lord Alberton, for I do not know why he should not be addressed by his proper title—will have other claims upon him," observed Mr. Levison, petulantly.

"There exists no claim which can supersede those of the protector, the more than father of my youth!" returned Denzil, warmly.

Mr. Levison was silent, but it did not appear like the silence of distrust or of indifference—he seemed to be afraid to trust his voice, and, when he again spoke to Dr. Rymer, it was tremulous, and feeble with agitation.

Some wine and water, which the doctor had recommended to both Mr. Levison and Fanny, was now brought.

"It would not be amiss, my dear sir, for you also to take some," observed the former, addressing Denzil.

"Do, Denzil," said Mr. Levison, in a tone of kindness, observing the latter refuse—"do be persuaded—you are looking very ill, I see." Denzil took the glass in silence—the calmness, he had so long struggled to maintain, was now entirely vanquished—and with difficulty he restrained the tears which would have shamed his manhood.

The doctor left them to attend Mrs. Charles Levison, having been sent for by Miss Rachel, who had accompanied her to her room.

Another source of grief and anxiety was now added to that which already weighed the unhappy Mr. Levison to the earth—for it was soon announced to him by the old housekeeper (Mrs. Williams) that the "poor young creature," as she emphatically styled the unfortunate Emma, was likely, in consequence of the terror and agitation she had suffered, to give birth prematurely to the infant whose coming had been anxiously looked to by all, as likely to fix the habits of the mother, and render even the thoughtless father more domestic and reflective.

Mr. Levison groaned aloud, as the old woman communicated this unwelcome information.

"They are all going! Yes, it's but too plain that we are doomed to be swept from the face of the earth—root and branch! Who would have believed that, in a few years, there should not be a single male of the name of Levison, which has flourished for so many hundred years—yet so it is! I am now the last of the name, and my

days are numbered—I thought—I hoped, however *he* might vex and torment me, that I should have lived to see his children springing up to perpetuate the name—but now all are gone!"

Fanny's tearful eyes, as she lifted them to his face, seemed to convey the reproach to which Mrs. Williams, with less gentleness, gave utterance.

"Not all, sir, neither," observed the old woman, "there are many parents who would think themselves blessed and happy in having such a child as you have; one so dutiful and good, and always ready to give up every thing for you and your wishes, as Miss Fanny has, poor thing!"

"I know it—I know it, Williams," said Mr. Levison, hastily, "I know that she deserves, and she knows that she possesses my fondest love—but you cannot understand—you cannot know what my feelings are, at the thought that, in a short time, my name and race will be extinct, and in a few years forgotten."

"It will be your own fault, then," murmured the old woman, whom age and long services emboldened to speak with freedom all that she thought. "It would be very easy to keep up both your name and your memory—and I could soon put you in the way to do it, and make them happy that have been too long kept asunder; but this is not a time, I know, to talk about such things—and, besides," she added, feeling apparently that she had gone too far, "it is impossible to tell how this may end—children born under such circumstances do not always die, and Heaven grant this may live, to comfort the mother, as well as you, sir!"

The prayer was warmly responded by the hearts of all

present; and it seemed to have been heard, for in less than half an hour Mrs. Williams hobbled into the room, to announce that the poor lady had given birth to a beautiful boy, and that both mother and child were likely to do well.

"Poor thing! poor thing!" ejaculated Mr. Levison, "it is in a mournful hour that he has come—but Heaven, in its mercy, protect the infant, and grant that its life may be happier than the auspices of its birth would indicate!"

Fanny hurried from the room, to conceal the torrent of mingled feelings which rushed upon her heart at this intelligence, to seek the room of the widowed mother, and to behold the little stranger, who was of so much importance, and who was destined to uphold the sinking name of the Levisons, but she did not leave it without a parting glance to Denzil, through whose heart that long alienated and forbidden glance sent a thrill of hope that, gloomy as were their present hours, there were yet happier ones in store for them.

"Poor child, she is sadly altered!" said Mr. Levison, whose looks had followed his daughter's exit; "we are all sadly altered, indeed, since the time you last sat in this room, Denzil. If I could then but have foreseen—but it is useless to repine—and you, too, have had your share of troubles—that poor woman's death, under such circumstances, I should have thought, must have been a dreadful shock to you—but I suppose your being likely, as of course you are, to establish your birthright, banished every feeling but joy—otherwise you would never have engaged in the frolic, as I suppose you thought it, which has ended so fatally—but I hope it will be a lesson——"

"And can it then be possible, sir, that you seriously believe me so heartless, so utterly lost to every feeling even of common decency, as to have voluntarily entered into the affair, which, as you truly say, has proved so fatal?" exclaimed Denzil, with warmth.

"If I have wronged you, I am sorry for it," returned Mr. Levison; "but such was certainly the impression I received from those who communicated the circumstances to me."

"It would be cruel and indecorous of me now to repeat circumstances which would reflect upon one who has paid the penalty of all his errors," returned Denzil, with solemnity; "but I may be allowed so far to vindicate myself as to assure you, that I was not even voluntarily his companion, and that only my wish to save him——"

"We will not say any more on the subject," interrupted Mr. Levison. "I am willing to believe I was wrong—but indeed, Denzil, I have had so much to irritate and exasperate me, and standing in the near relation you do to one who has behaved so ill as the Earl of Raeburn has to me and my family—but I will not say any more about it—I wish to do every one justice, and I have no doubt I was under a misapprehension respecting your conduct, for which I sincerely apologise."

The hope, which but a few short minutes before had thrilled Denzil's bosom, and sent the blood in rapid currents to his worn and pallid cheek, died suddenly at the short explanation of his feelings, and the cold tone of the *amende* which Mr. Levison had uttered.

The son of Earl Raeburn, it was plain, could not be acknowledged as the friend of Mr. Levison.

It became, indeed, every moment more evident that as the son of the Earl of Raeburn, rather than as the once-favoured child of his adoption, did Mr. Levison now consider his companion; and the latter, unable even to offer a word in excuse or extenuation of the offence his father had committed, felt almost happy that the entrance of Dr. Rymer, and the recommendation of the latter to Mr. Levison to retire to bed, afforded him (Denzil) an opportunity of taking his leave.

CHAPTER XXX.

> Let's take the instant by the forward top,
> For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
> Th' inaudible and noiseless foot of time
> Steals ere we can effect them.—SHAKESPEARE.

WITHIN two days of each other, Denzil followed to the tomb the remains of his mother, and the friend and companion of his youth; he whom, in spite of all his follies and errors, he had ever regarded as a brother.

From the period of Charles's death, he had never ventured to repeat his visit, but he learned daily the state of the family from Rosa Somerville, who had flown to console and support her cousin Emma, the moment she had heard the mournful tidings of her loss.

Mrs. Charles Levison was, considering all the circumstances, surprisingly well and composed, after the first

violent emotions of grief and horror had subsided. The infant was thriving, and Mr. Levison's whole thoughts and anxieties seemed centered in its existence; though at times he sank into such alarming fits of gloom and despondency, that Dr. Rymer had strongly recommended his instant removal to his native air, as the only means likely to counteract some alarming symptoms, which he considered the effects of the violent excitement of his mind.

"Poor Fanny," continued Miss Somerville, "already foresees with agony that the moment is not far distant which will rob her of her only parent; and though she tries to appear calm and serene, lest she should increase his melancholy, it is very evident that she suffers severely in secret. Poor aunt Rachel, too, in addition to all her other sorrows, has just received information that a great part of her fortune, which was in the hands of the banking-house of which their old friend Mr. Irwin was the principal, is lost, owing to their having failed in some commercial speculations. 'It is scarcely worth a thought, at my time of life,' observed the good old lady, when she told me the sad tidings, 'yet I am hurt, because I had hoped, that, after I was dead and gone, there were some whom it would have benefited—indeed, I have made but little use of it for some years, unless for others—and I am only grieved now that I shall no longer be able to assist those who may want it.'"

"And does her brother know of her loss?" demanded Mr. Dormer, who was present when Rosa repeated this.

"No—she says he has quite enough to vex and fret him already," replied Rosa, "and that it would be time enough to tell him if she should by any circumstance, be obliged to do so.

Mr. Dormer remained for a few moments in deep thought.

"It is a pity," he observed, at length, "if Mr. Levison is in danger, that some friend does not hint to him the situation in which his sister is placed. He has it fully in his power, without injury to his heirs, to provide handsomely for her, who, with her excellent disposition, even temper, and active habits, may live many years; and certainly ought not to be left in the slightest degree dependent on others, however well disposed they may be towards her. I know not," he continued, "what Mr. Levison's arrangements may be, as to his property after his death; but it is scarcely probable that he should have made any considerable bequest to his sister, supposing her to be already possessed of a sum amply sufficient for her wants; and he ought certainly, therefore, to have the opportunity given him of rectifying the error. I must endeavour to see him, after this melancholy affair is over," he added, alluding to the funeral, "and at once point out to him——"

"It will perhaps be better for my son to do it, my dear sir," observed Earl Raeburn; "you will agree with me, that it will be highly proper that Lord Alberton should take the earliest opportunity of restoring to Mr. Levison the deed by which the latter conferred independency on Denzil Montgomery, a name which from henceforth will be extinct, though the obligations which in that character he owed to Mr. Levison, can never be forgotten, I trust, by either him or me. The restoration of that paper will afford Denzil an excellent opportunity for introducing the good old lady's recent loss, and at once place affairs on a right footing."

Mr. Dormer agreed with this proposal, and it was determined that it should be carried into effect immediately after the funeral.

A formal undertaker's card, to request the presence of Mr. Dormer and Lord Alberton to the funeral of Mr. Charles Levison, was the only announcement they received of that event. The ceremony was conducted as privately as possible—a verdict of temporary derangement had sanctified the interment of this unfortunate victim of dissipation, with the usual rites, in hallowed ground—but all pomp and pageantry were properly avoided, and only Lord Alberton, Mr. Dormer, and the medical gentleman attended the heir of the house of Levison to his grave.

"It is twenty-two years, to the very day," said the old housekeeper, who stood by the coffin when Lord Alberton and Mr. Dormer entered to have a parting look at the corpse, before it was closed up for ever in its narrow abode. "It is just twenty-two years, since the last of the family was buried—and he, too, met a violent death. My poor dear master—he didn't look as pleasant as poor master Charles does, though," she continued, while her tears dropped fast on the face over which she was leaning; "but they didn't hurry him away, with scarcely a soul to follow him," she added, after a long pause, and in a tone of anger. "No——there were hundreds, horse and foot, followed him to the churchyard, and every thing was handsome and proper, and becoming the name of Levison!"

"But, my good Mrs. Williams," said Dr. Rymer, who at this moment entered the room, "the circumstances now would render such a display improper; and you——"

"Aye, aye," interrupted the old woman, petulantly, "you can all talk—but nobody can tell what I feel, at seeing the dear boy, that used to be the pride of all our hearts, treated with no more ceremony than if——aye, if it was even me, or old Thomas there, Mr. Levison would have had us put into the grave with as much decency as this is to be done! Ah, Mr. Denzil," she continued, for the first time perceiving Lord Alberton, "two-and-twenty years ago——"

"The poor old woman is quite childish!" said Mr. Dormer, hurrying his companion out of the room, before she could finish the sentence.

Lord Alberton had, indeed, been severely shocked by the unlooked-for recurrence to an event which he could never think of without shuddering; and he could not but be struck with horror and surprise, at the strange coincidence which Mrs. Williams had pointed out.

"It is indeed a strange coincidence," returned Mr. Dormer, "if the old woman is correct in her remembrance of the event to which she alluded."

"Excuse me, sir," observed the butler, who had entered the room with refreshments, and heard the remark, "I can answer for Mrs. Williams's correctness—I was then groom to Mr. Alfred Levison, and well remember the day of his funeral, as well as of his death. It is just twenty-two years to-day, since he was buried—but it is still stranger, Mr. Denzil—forgive me, I can't help still calling you by the old name—It is still stranger, sir," he added, in a lower voice, "that the very day appointed for Miss Fanny's wedding, was the anniversary of her uncle's dreadful death! My poor master, in his great joy and bustle, seemed quite to have forgotten, and indeed

every body but me seemed not to recollect what day it was—and it wouldn't have been becoming in me to have interfered; but my mind misgave me something would happen, even after they set out to church—and so I told Mrs. Williams, as soon as they were gone, and she blamed me that I didn't speak of it before. However, we agreed we would not say anything about it then, for fear it should damp master's good spirits; but we need not have been afraid, as things turned out—though it was no more than I expected, that the match, after all, would come to nothing! But, heaven have mercy on me! little did I think there was such sorrow as this in store for us all!"

"It was indeed an ill omen, that Mr. Levison should have accidentally fixed on such a day," observed Mr. Dormer.

"It was indeed, sir," rejoined the garrulous old man, "not that I believe," he added, significantly, "that any body grieved much for the disappointment, except my master—and he, poor gentleman, had set his whole heart upon it! He has never been himself since; and, what with that, and this last affair, I am afraid he never will again, for——"

He was interrupted by the entrance of Miss Rachel, the only one of the family who was visible, and who now came, by stealth as it were, to mingle her grief with her old friend Mr. Dormer, and her former favourite, Denzil, as she still called him.

"It is very kind and good of you, to attend upon this melancholy occasion," she observed, "after the affronts that have been offered to you both—but you must forgive my poor brother—for he will not be long in this

world, I am sure of it. And Dr. Rymer," she added, addressing that gentleman, who had just joined them, "you must know it, too—that his days are fast drawing to a close!"

"Mr. Levison's health is certainly very precarious, madam," replied the doctor, "and I must acknowledge you are right to be prepared for the worst—yet I by no means despair, if we can but get him into the country."

It was plain, however, that the good old lady could not give credence to the flattering hope which the doctor would have inspired; and Mr. Dormer, having ascertained from her, that she was resolutely determined not to add to her brother's troubles, by letting him know the loss she had sustained, resolved, in his own mind, that Lord Alberton's proposed interview ought not to be delayed an hour longer than was absolutely unavoidable. He therefore seized the present opportunity of inquiring of her, whether Mr. Levison would consent to receive Lord Alberton on the following morning.

"It will never do for me to ask him, Denzil," she observed, "but I will run the risk of introducing you without consulting him. I know his heart is greatly softened towards you—but on one point he is still violently determined. But I must leave you to try what you can do with him yourself."

Alberton's cheeks glowed—he could not but understand what Miss Rachel's words implied, though he felt that this was not the time to introduce the subject to which she alluded.

The solemn ceremony, which consigned the remains of the unfortunate Charles Levison to their native earth, was concluded; and Lord Alberton, for the last time,

returned to his solitary apartments at Brompton, it having been arranged that he should give them up on the following day, and take possession, with his father, of a house in Grosvenor Place, which originally had been purchased by the latter for the reception of his intended bride.

The day had been uncommonly gloomy and wet, and a heavy shower of rain was falling, when Lord Alberton arrived at the door of his residence; and, having discharged the coachman, was hastily entering it, when he was arrested by the gentle hand of a female being laid on his arm.

Supposing it was some casual appeal to his charity, from the appearance of the woman, he hastily put his hand into his pocket for some silver, when he was startled by the well-known voice of Mrs. Delaney.

"I am indeed humbled," she observed, in a lofty tone, "when even Mr. Montgomery treats me as a common mendicant—and yet, what am I else?" she continued, wringing her hands, and bursting into a violent flood of tears.

It was not in Alberton's nature to behold distress without sympathy, and especially female distress—yet it must be confessed, that, at this moment, perplexity and vexation were predominant in his mind, over all his compassion and pity.

It was impossible for him to keep Mrs. Delaney standing in the rain, to relate her distress; nor could he venture to hurt her feelings by a summary offer of his purse; and, to ask her to enter the house at twelve o'clock at night, wet, draggled, and abject as her appearance was, altogether, would, he feared, call forth some observations

from his precise landlady, which would be equally humiliating to her pride.

Mrs. Delaney seemed in a moment to comprehend the cause of his hesitation.

"Do not think I am going to intrude myself upon you, Montgomery," she continued. "I know this is not a proper hour for an interview, even with one who once looked upon you with maternal feelings."

"Forgive me, Mrs. Delaney," interrupted Alberton, "I certainly must decline to-night inviting you to enter; but I will call upon you in the morning, if you will leave me your address."

"Address!" she repeated, with energy. "Denzil, I have none to give! I am houseless, penniless—this morning I was thrust out of my wretched abode, and since noon I have wandered the streets, until the sudden impulse of despair drove me here to seek you."

"And have you really no place to rest in, to-night?" demanded Lord Alberton, with undissembled horror. "Where is your son, and your youngest daughter?"

"Both gone—both deserted me!" she replied.

"Something must be done!" exclaimed Lord Alberton, in great perplexity and distress, looking at Ned, who was waiting with the candle in his hand.

"It's a decent tidy body that landlady 'ploys for charing," whispered Ned, "and she's in the kitchen yet—shall I go to her, and see if she can find a bed for the night?"

His master assented, and in the mean time he entreated Mrs. Delaney to accept the contents of his purse, observing that he would see her on the morrow, and then arrange how he could be of further service to her.

The unhappy woman would have poured forth a pro-

fusion of thanks—the lofty spirit, which seemed to have dictated her first address, appearing completely subdued by his generosity.

The char-woman, whose appearance fully warranted Ned's recommendation, cheerfully offered a part of her bed for the accommodation of the wanderer—observing, she had known what it was to be without a home or a friend herself, though God had proved her friend, and now she had a clean room and a comfortable bed of her own—his name be praised for it!

"Give the poor woman five shillings, Ned," whispered Lord Alberton, and then, bowing to Mrs. Delaney, he retreated, to avoid the thanks of both her and her protectress, the poor char-woman.

Shocked and grieved as he felt at the state of abject distress and destitution to which this unfortunate woman was reduced, Lord Alberton could not but reflect upon the justness of that retributive dispensation, which had driven her to seek an asylum from the son of her, against whom, in the days of prosperity, she had closed her doors. From his mother he had heard instances of Mrs. Delaney's heartlessness and inhumanity, which, according to the maxims of the world, would have justified him in rejecting with scorn her appeal to his charity—but Alberton's rules of conduct were derived from a higher source than the fallible and selfish doctrines of man; and his heart, as well as his principles, prompted him to return good for evil.

The awful event, and the melancholy duties which had occupied his thoughts since the morning when he beheld Delaney, had prevented his bestowing a thought as to the situation of that wretched individual; but Mrs. Delaney's

sudden appearance, and evident destitution, now recalled forcibly to his mind the dreadful situation in which the former was placed, and he reproached himself for not having made some enquiries respecting him.

Resolving to repair that neglect on the morrow, and as far as he could, in conscience, aid him, Lord Alberton returned to rest, happy in the consciousness of having rescued one from misery, who he trusted might yet live to become a useful member of society, when freed, as she most likely would be, for a time, from the pernicious example of him who had encouraged, if not created those habits of selfishness and deception, which were so prominent in Mrs. Delaney's character.

There was an expression in Ned's countenance, as he waited upon his master's breakfast table, that told the latter something had happened which he was eager to communicate; and, naturally supposing that the last night's adventure was at the bottom of it, the latter took the first opportunity of inquiring whether he (Ned) had seen the poor woman, and heard anything of Mrs. Delaney.

Ned instantly replied in the affirmative, adding—

"I was sorry to hear what I was forced to hear," he continued, "for Mrs. Jenkins (the charwoman) could talk of nothing else but 'the lady,' and her misfortunes; and I was sorry, indeed I could not help it, to hear that Mrs. Delaney should have lowered herself so far as to tell Mrs. Jenkins all her troubles, and that her husband was in prison and under sentence of death."

"Death!" exclaimed Lord Alberton, with horror.

"Yes, sir, that was what she told the woman, and very foolish it was of her, I think, to lower herself so to one that could'nt have no right to be considered her equal,"

returned Ned; "for, though I don't like her no more nor the rest o' them, yet a lady is a lady, and——"

"To death!" repeated Lord Alberton, on whose ear Ned's assertion of the rights of ladies had fallen, without exciting the slightest attention.

"Yes, sir, so she said," he replied, in answer to his master's last exclamation; "and somehow, bad as he may be, I didn't like to hear of it—and, most of all, to hear that she, that ought to be the last to speak or think ill of him, should be the first to tell of his faults—but she gave Mrs. Jenkins such a history of him, and she said, too, that——"

"I do not wish to hear what she said, Ned," interrupted Lord Alberton, who felt thoroughly disgusted with the want of delicacy, and even of humanity, which Mrs. Delaney had shewn, in thus making her husband's wretched situation the subject of discussion, and especially to a low ignorant woman, whose very compassion she ought to have felt degrading to her. The situation of the wretched Delaney, however, excited in his mind the most poignant feelings of regret and sorrow, and he determined to learn from his wife, whether there was a possibility of rendering the unhappy man any service. For this purpose he inquired of Ned where he could see Mrs. Delaney.

"You need not go to look for her, I expect," replied Ned, with his usual bluntness, "for Mrs. Jenkins tells me she was very particular in inquiring what time you got up and breakfasted, that she might not miss you; for, she said, she must strike while the iron was hot, and try to get enough of you to carry her to Ireland, where she'd got plenty of friends and acquaintances, and didn't doubt

she should do well yet—meaning, as Mrs. Jenkins supposes, that she should get another husband there!"

"I rather suspect, Ned, that your friend, Mrs. Jenkins, is too clever in drawing inferences; and, in fact, that it is altogether Mrs. Jenkins's language, and not Mrs. Delaney's that you have repeated—for I can scarcely believe she would have been so foolish, as to have talked in such a ridiculous manner."

"I donna know," replied Ned, rather sulkily, "Mrs. Jenkins be no friend of mine, except that she's a civil, decent-behaved body; but, when ladies let themselves down to drink two or three glasses of brandy, pretending to keep up their *sperrits*, and settle their *flusterfications*, or whatever they call it, I'm apt to think it isn't much to be wondered at that they talk nonsense, and forget themselves."

"Certainly not," returned Lord Alberton, to whom this observation afforded at once an elucidation of much that he had been at various times puzzled to account for, in the conduct of Mrs. Delaney.

He was still reflecting on the dangers and difficulties to which his connexion with this family had exposed him, when Mrs. Delaney was announced.

Though somewhat more gentle and subdued in manner than on the night before, Alberton could plainly perceive, in her looks, and overstrained attempts to appear interesting, the effects of the pernicious and degrading habit of which Ned had accused her; and it rendered him more decidedly cold and reserved than he could have otherwise (considering her distressed situation, and the light in which he had formerly beheld her) brought himself to be; but Mrs. Delaney was not to be disconcerted by one

whom she considered a mere novice; and one, too, whose credulity and inexperience she had so often made subservient to her purposes; and Lord Alberton was compelled to listen to a long and highly-wrought detail of her sufferings since the desertion of her family, who had all, according to her account, repaid her undeviating care and tenderness with the grossest ingratitude.

"And your husband, madam?" he demanded, observing that she seemed to pass over him without notice.

Mrs. Delaney gave a tragic start, and shudder.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "do not mention that unhappy man—I have tried to forget that such a being still exists, to load me with sorrow and shame! But you know already, surely, Mr. Montgomery, his crimes——"

"Madam! Mrs. Delaney!" interrupted Alberton, with undisguised contempt and reprobation, "I wish not to hear—I could not have expected from you, as his wife—as the mother of his children—any condemnation, —any thing, indeed, but sorrow and commiseration for his sufferings. I would have asked you, indeed, if you thought it were possible, by any exertion of mine, or of my friends, to procure a mitigation of that dreadful sentence, which fills my heart with horror—and which, to you, I should think, must be too terrible to be contemplated without the bitterest agony."

"You are right—you are right!" said Mrs. Delaney, covering her face with her hands, and seeming for a moment overwhelmed by the acuteness of her feelings, "I have tried, indeed, to remember him only as the author of all the misery and humiliation I have endured —as the tyrant, to whom I have for years been compelled to submit even my very principles, and to practise

dissimulation and guile, which was hateful to me—and for which my reward has been to be hated by him, and despised and contemned by those who, but for him, would have regarded me with respect and affection! Yes, Mr. Montgomery, what I am, Delaney has made me! yet I feel, as you truly say, that he is still my husband, and the father of my children—and there is no sacrifice I would shrink from, to restore him to freedom!"

"Of that, there can remain no hopes," returned Lord Alberton; "but his life——"

"His life is safe, Mr. Montgomery," she replied, with some surprise. "Surely, you did not think me so void of feeling, as to have been thus unmoved, had his life been in danger? It is true, he was condemned to die—but the sentence has been commuted into banishment for life."

Lord Alberton felt a heavy weight removed from his heart, and his companion became less an object of aversion in his sight, though he did not think it necessary to apologize to her for an error, of which she had herself been the primary cause, by her exaggerated statement to the woman with whom she had passed the night. On the contrary, without noticing her reproaches, he proceeded to ask her in what manner he could advance her interests, hinting that, however disposed to serve her, he had too many calls upon his time and attention, to allow him to devote more than the present moment to her.

Mrs. Delaney would have commenced a pathetic lamentation on her hard fate, in having forfeited the confidence and esteem of one towards whom she had ever felt and shown an affection, which his talents and virtues alone could excuse—but her auditor soon convinced her

that her flattery was unpleasant and unacceptable, and he cut her short in one of her best-turned periods, by saying—

"It is your wish, I understand, Mrs. Delaney, to return to Ireland?"

Mrs. Delaney's large blue eyes were opened to their fullest extent, and she was about to express her astonishment at his having thus forestalled her wishes; but he again prevented her by proceeding very coolly to ask her what sum she considered necessary for that purpose.

The lady was taken by surprise, but she had probably made up her mind not to lose any advantage by over delicacy, and she named a sum, which, habitually disregardless as he was of the value of money, appeared to Lord Alberton so exorbitant, that he could not but look upon it as insulting him, to suppose that he could be so grossly imposed upon.

Without making any immediate reply, therefore, he opened his desk, and, having written an order upon his banker, presented it to her, observing——

"That, madam, you will find is a draft for half the amount you have named, which is as much, I presume, as I can, under all circumstances, be expected to contribute, and certainly quite as much as I feel it necessary I should do."

The calmness and decision with which this was uttered, and the keen searching look of the dark eye which was fixed full on her face, seemed at once to defeat all Mrs. Delaney's hitherto dauntless effrontery—she folded and unfolded the paper, with an air of hesitation, as if meditating a reply, but Lord Alberton completely prevented it by saying,

"Pardon me, madam, I have an appointment, which requires my immediate attention; and therefore must take my leave of you, wishing you all possible happiness," and, without waiting for her to utter a word, he rang the bell for the servant to attend her to the door, and quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

> 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
> To give these mourning duties to your father—
> But you must know your father lost a father,
> That father lost his.—SHAKESPEARE.

THE plea of an appointment, by which Lord Alberton had succeeded in shortening his interview with his troublesome visitant, was not, as she most probably supposed, a mere excuse for that purpose; for the fact was, that, at the moment he spoke, the former had recollected that the hour was already arrived which he had appointed for his visit to Mr. Levison.

To St. James's Place, therefore, he proceeded, and was immediately introduced into the breakfast-room, in which he found the kind-hearted Miss Rachel alone, busily engaged in settling her household accounts, which, she observed, with a deep sigh, were sadly confused and in arrear; not only because the late melancholy events had rendered her incapable of attending to them, but that she

had lost those who used to be always at hand, and ready to assist her in any little perplexities arising from the dimness of her sight, and the difficulty of comprehending the crabbed hands of the butcher, the baker, and other tradesmen.

"You used to be my secretary, Denzil," she observed, sighing again, "and then I was never at a loss—not but Fanny has done her best to supply your loss, till lately—but, poor thing, I cannot bear to tease her now—for she has had so much to fret and grieve her, and indeed so have we all, since we left Cumberland!—Ah, Denzil, those were happy days, such as none of us will ever see again! though you are young, to be sure, and I hear your father is very kind and proud of you—and so he ought to be—and a great comfort it ought to be to him, too, that he is able at last to do you justice, and compensate a little for all the misery he has caused."

Alberton felt that this was not the time for him to attempt a vindication of his father—he therefore only observed that he trusted, at some future opportunity, he should be able to reconcile her to Earl Raeburn, who, he was sure, felt the highest esteem and regard for her.

The old lady shook her head incredulously, and then, closing her account books, she observed——

"There's only one thing that can ever restore Earl Raeburn to my friendship—and that is, that, if I live to see him the father-in-law of Fanny Levison, I may forget that I once thought to have beheld him her husband—not that I regret he was not—only for the sake of my poor brother, who thinks his daughter everlastingly disgraced by what has happened."

"He is the only person in the world who could think so," replied Lord Alberton, warmly.

"I wish you may be able to persuade him so, my dear boy," returned Miss Rachel, whose manners had gradually returned to their usual kindness and freedom towards one whom she had ever distinguished with great favour, in their former intercourse.

Without further observation, she led the way to Mr. Levison's chamber.

"That used to be your room once," said Miss Rachel, as they passed a room; "it is now poor Emma's."

The door was at this moment opened, by a servant coming out, and Alberton caught a transient glance of Fanny, who was standing near it, with an infant in her arms. She did not, however, perceive him, and he dared not linger to indulge himself with a second look, though his old friend Susan, who caught his eager glance, purposely delayed closing the door, in hopes that he would profit by the opportunity.

Mr. Levison had just risen, and his look was awfully discouraging, when his sister, preceding her *protegé* into the room, observed, in a tone evidently intended to deprecate his anger, that she had brought a visitor with her, who was very anxious to be admitted to see him.

"I was in hopes, Lord Alberton, that our accounts had closed," observed the invalid, who looked wretchedly ill, and evidently struggled to assume a calmness he was far from feeling.

"On my part, sir, they can never close," returned Alberton; "the debt of gratitude which I owe to you, my whole life will be insufficient to repay—would that

it were in my power to convince you of my sincerity by more than words—that I might be allowed to devote every hour of my life to you, if——"

"Oh, no, no—you have a father, now—one to whom your life must be devoted," interrupted Mr. Levison, in a petulant and hasty tone. "I do not want to say anything against him to you; but you must know, you must feel, that it is quite impossible that you can, as his son, be received again into my family. I anticipate all that you are come to say, Denzil—Lord Alberton, I should say—I am sorry for you, because I believe, after all, that you are much less blameable than I thought you—but we must both try to forget all the past. I shall soon forget every thing, in the grave! And you, with wealth, and rank, and the world before you, will soon forget that there ever existed such an insignificant old fellow as Charles Levison."

"Never, sir!—I must forget my maker, if I forget my preserver!" returned Alberton, with emphasis. "To whom, but yourself, do I owe the advantages of which you speak—but which will no longer be advantages, if they are to banish me from your affections, which I once flattered myself I shared with——"

"You did—you did!" said the old man, trembling with emotion, and extending his hand, which Alberton eagerly pressed. "My own boy, my poor Charles!" he continued, while the big tears forced themselves down his cheeks, "was not dearer to me than Denzil Montgomery was—nay, I will own, still is! But as the son of Earl Raeburn, I tremble with indignation while I pronounce his name! Oh, that I were but as when he and I first met, that I might revenge the insult he dared offer my poor girl—and yet it served me right, Denzil, for I

was cruel and unjust to you! I know I was—I was blinded by the prospect of seeing my darling Fanny ennobled—but I have been punished, bitterly punished—and he, the villain! to dare to show himself at the altar, when he knew that he was already the husband of another—and that, at some future period, his wife and her children might come forward to——"

"My dear, dear sir, he knew not that any such persons were in existence," interrupted Alberton.

"And do you attempt to vindicate him, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Levison, sternly; "you, whom his neglect consigned to obscurity—you, whose mother, by his culpable ——but I will not say another word against him—he is your father, and you have a right to think well of him! You were ever dutiful and obedient to me, Denzil—I must still call you by that name which I gave you, because I thought it for your interest that you should not be known as the child of that unfortunate——you were christened, I believe, William——but that was not what I was going to say—I meant to say to you, that it is but right that you should transfer to your father all that duty and obedience which you once so fully practised towards me. I shall ever wish you well, Denzil—nay, I will say more, I shall ever regard you with affection—and, when I am laid in the grave, if it should still be your wish to unite your fate with that of my child, you have my free consent so to do; but while I live, as the son of a man whom I never can do otherwise than despise—I—we must be strangers! I shall think of Denzil Montgomery, and forget Lord Alberton."

Alberton did not attempt a reply to this—he was deeply affected by the return of that kindness which he had feared

was, however undeservedly on his part, for ever extinguished in the bosom of his benefactor; but his unfeigned regard and esteem for the latter, would not suffer him to rejoice in the anticipation that his promised happiness, in an union with the object of his early love, would not be long delayed.

It was, indeed, but too evident that Mr. Levison's shattered frame would not long survive the repeated shocks he had endured; and Lord Alberton contemplated with unfeigned sorrow the striking ravages which disease had made, in so short a time, in his appearance. The thought recalled to him the chief object for which he had sought this interview; and, as cautiously as possible, to avoid irritating the irascible temper of the invalid, he introduced the subject of the settlement which he (Mr. Levison) had so generously bestowed upon him.

The old gentleman listened to him in silence.

"I will not pretend to say that I am sorry you have no longer occasion for it, Denzil," he calmly replied, as he took the proffered deed; "but, I can assure you, that I do not receive it back, with half the pleasure that I bestowed it. I had added something to it, too, in the way of bequest, in my will, but as that will be superfluous, as you observe, I shall make an alteration there too. My library I always intended for you, and that I shall still beg you to accept, as a mark of my esteem."

Alberton was too deeply affected to utter a word for some minutes, but at length he contrived to introduce the name of Miss Rachel Levison, and, by degrees, imparted to the old gentleman the information of her recent loss, and his own surmise that Mr. Levison, if acquainted

with it, would wish to make some arrangement to secure her independence.

"You are quite right, my dear boy; it is just like you, always thoughtful and prudent for others!" exclaimed Mr. Levison. "This, indeed, must be looked to, immediately. Heaven forbid I should neglect poor Rachel, or leave her dependant; she has been a kind, good sister to me; and deeply was I indebted to her, even in money concerns, in my youthful days; for I am some years younger than her, though a great deal older in constitution, Denzil; and she has never been repaid. Her answer always was, that she had more than she knew what to do with. Poor thing! poor thing! and she would have kept this a secret, and let me die in her debt!"

Again and again he repeated his thanks to Denzil, for having put it in his power to do an act of justice, by making a handsome provision for his sister; observing, that he should delay it no longer than till his arrival in Cumberland, for which place he intended setting out in a few days.

Lord Alberton heard this resolution with real concern; he had begun to hope that the confidence, which was restored between him and his old friend, might be improved to the utmost of his wishes, if they remained near to each other, but this separation seemed to place another bar to his hopes.

"Yes, yes," observed Mr. Levison, as if reflecting on what he had just learned, "I will not delay. Old Goodwin must be sent for, as soon as I am once more at home, and we must have a new will altogether; that will be the best way."

Lord Alberton now rose to take his leave; he had said and done all that he came to say and do, and he could find no pretext to prolong his stay.

"May I be permitted to call and see you, during the short time you remain in town, sir?" he demanded, in a faltering voice.

"I know not how to refuse you, Denzil," returned Mr. Levison, "and yet——" he hesitated; "well, well, be it so, my boy—for when we do part, it will be for ever; and I don't feel quite strong enough to bear that, to-day."

Alberton pressed his hand gratefully,

"Till to-morrow, then, sir, I will bid you farewell," he observed.

"Be it so," returned Mr. Levison, "but, mind—no attempts to take advantage——you know my resolution, and if——"

"You were pleased to say I had ever acted dutifully to you, sir," interrupted Alberton; "trust me, I will never forfeit that character."

"Well, I believe you are a noble fellow—you always were, Denzil—and now you have my permission to go and talk to Fanny, if you wish—and there is poor Emma, too, will be glad to see you—and the dear child—you have not seen that, either—I had forgotten that."

Alberton repeated his farewell, and hastened to the breakfast-room, where he found Miss Rachel, again seated before her account books, which, however, it was very evident, had received but little attention from her during his absence.

She eagerly inquired how he had left her brother, and whether he had yielded to his (Alberton's) wishes.

"I should not at the present moment dare express any wish on my respected friend, except the wish of being restored to his esteem; and in that, I have, I am happy to say, fully succeeded," replied Lord Alberton; "as a proof of which, I am allowed to ask your permission to see Fanny, and, if you think it would not be improper, Mrs. Charles Levison also."

"I must break it to Emma, and see how she bears it," observed the thoughtful old lady. "Poor thing, this is the first day she has been up—but I will go and send Fanny to you, directly."

The few minutes that elapsed between her departure and Fanny's appearance, seemed hours to the impatient Alberton; but, at length, her well-known step was heard —he flew to the door, and Fanny sank trembling into his arms.

"My aunt has, indeed, given me a surprise," she observed, gently extricating herself from his ardent embrace, but suffering him to retain her hand, as he led her to a seat—"yet my heart, improbable as it appeared, anticipated that the stranger, who, she said, waited to see me, could be no other than——"

"Than he who has too long been a stranger, dearest Fanny; and who, even now, in this moment of invaluable indulgence, anticipates with misery the hour which will again separate us. Your father tells me that you are going to leave town in a few days."

"Doctor Rymer has pronounced it advisable that my father should be removed, as soon as possible, to Cumberland," returned Fanny; "and, of course, I go with him—but, is it possible!—have you seen my father, and does he know——"

"I have his sanction for seeking this interview, my beloved," replied Alberton; "but I cannot tell you what has passed—it is most probable that you will hear it all, from your father's own lips——thus far, however, Fanny, I feel I am not trespassing on his injunctions."

Fanny remained silent—but her lover read, in her downcast eye, in the deep blush that glowed on her before pale cheek, and the faint uncertain pressure of the small hand which was clasped in his, the transporting certainty that absence and difficulty had not lessened her attachment to him.

His silent and enraptured gaze on her beautiful face embarrassed her; yet Fanny, usually so eloquent on every subject with those she loved, and who, an hour previous, could have fancied that she possessed exhaustless themes on which to talk with him by whom she was at present seated, could not now utter a word.

Rachel returned, and Alberton, though he wished she had been less alert, could not but immediately accept her invitation to the room of the invalid.

"Fanny will come after us," said her aunt, observing Alberton's look.

"Poor girl, her spirits are very weak," she observed, when they were out of hearing, "and so it is best she should stay till after your first meeting with Emma."

Emma, however, bore with much greater calmness than could have been expected, the sight of one who could not but recal to her recollection the melancholy fate which had made her a widow, and her child fatherless; but the first transports of her grief had been so violent, that they appeared to have nearly exhausted it; and, after a few tears, and an application to her smelling-bot-

tle, the youthful widow became composed enough to enter into conversation with her visitor upon different subjects; one of which was the pug-nose of her baby, which, she declared, she could not bear to look at—it was so abominably frightful; and another was the strong propensity Rosa Somerville, who had just left her, evinced to talk about the Earl of Raeburn.

"I've been quizzing her about it, this morning," she added, "and I declare, by her blushes, I do believe that it is a fact, that she has a *penchant* for your adorable papa; though, by the by, it does not seem his least recommendation that he is so amazingly like you, that it appears quite a wonder to her, she says, that we didn't all find out, long ago, how nearly you were related."

Lord Alberton did not reply to this *badinage*, which appeared to him both unbecoming and unseasonable; and Emma, observing Fanny at this moment entering, exclaimed——

"I declare, Fanny, Denzil does not seem pleased at the idea of having such a pretty mamma-in-law as Rosa. I am afraid," she added, in a whisper in Lord Alberton's ear, "that you are somewhat dog-in-the-manger-ish—wouldn't have her yourself, nor don't like any one else!"

"If there was any reasonable ground for what you insinuate, Emma, our friend, Miss Somerville, would be little indebted to you, I think," observed Fanny; "but as we all know it is purely your own invention——"

"Oh, my invention," interrupted Mrs. Levison, "now, do not say that, Fanny—for you know well, that Rosa entertains us constantly with what the Earl does and says, and all the rest of it—you shake your head, but, I would venture to lay you any wager you like, that Rosa

Somerville will be Countess of Raeburn, and you and Denzil will have to ask her blessing, like two pretty dutiful children."

The blush which glowed in Fanny's cheeks was not more vivid than that which for a moment crimsoned that of Lord Alberton; but it quickly faded from the countenance of the latter, and left it paler than before—while a deep irrepressible sigh betrayed that this raillery was very far from producing a pleasing impression on his mind.

Fanny's whispered remonstrance had not, however, its intended effect in silencing her cousin; and the latter continued to amuse herself with deriding Lord Alberton's solemnity, and declaring that it was produced by the usual jealousy of grown-up sons towards youthful mothers-in-law.

"There might, I should think, easily occur to your mind, Emma, that there are much more weighty reasons for my solemnity, as you call it," observed Lord Alberton, who felt vexed at her pertinacity on a subject, which, he was sure, would have been deeply mortifying to Rosa Somerville, could she have known what passed.

"There, now, I declare it is very cruel of you," exclaimed Mrs. Charles Levison, applying her cambric handkerchief to her eyes, "I had just, for a moment, contrived to forget what a wretched, unhappy creature I am —and you take care to remind me of it," she continued, sobbing.

"I did not, indeed, intend any such thing, Emma," returned Lord Alberton. "I should indeed deserve your appellation of cruel, if I could have meant so—but I alluded to my own situation, to my own recent loss, and

other circumstances, which contribute to depress me, and render me unable to bear raillery."

Emma, however, had now excited herself into a fit of weeping, and she continued to indulge it, until she heard Lord Alberton say, in reply to a question from Miss Rachel, that he believed it was Earl Raeburn's intention to stay in town until the House broke up.

"Well, I've been wondering, for these two or three days," exclaimed Emma, suddenly drying her tears, "whether Earl Raeburn intends to take possession of the place in Cumberland, that he bought when——well, I will not say when, Fanny, if you do not like to hear it," she continued, observing Fanny's imploring look; "but, however, Denzil must know what I mean—and all I want to know is, whether we shall be neighbours in the summer—for, you know, it is only just a mile and a half from the Hall, to——"

"I really do not know what are Earl Raeburn's intentions, at present," interrupted Lord Alberton, in whose bosom this observation had kindled an unlooked-for hope; "but, you may rely on it, if my persuasions will have any weight with him, many weeks will not elapse, before we shall have the honour of being your neighbours."

"Well, I declare, that will be delightful, won't it, Fanny?" exclaimed the still volatile Emma. "I shall not half so much dread going down, if I know we shall have two or three beaux we may depend on; and then, if it should happen that Earl Raeburn persuades Mr. Dormer and Miss Somerville to be of his party, and that is not unlikely—is it, Denzil?" she added, with one of her archest smiles.

"I do not know that it is," replied Alberton, "though perhaps it may not, upon consideration, be very likely that Mr. Dormer will bring his niece to a house where there would be no lady to receive her."

"Oh, I could soon point out a way of getting over that difficulty—could not you, Fanny?" said the incorrigible Emma.

It was impossible for Lord Alberton to suppress a smile at the manner in which this question was put, and the look with which Fanny replied to it; but the smile was again speedily succeeded by a sigh, for he could not forget how strong a barrier there was, as yet, interposed to prevent his even looking forward with pleasure to the event to which the thoughtless Emma alluded, and which she seemed to think was now irrevocably concluded upon, since she had learned that Alberton had passed nearly an hour with Mr. Levison, and that his visit to herself, and his communication with Fanny, had received the old gentleman's sanction.

Aunt Rachel, too, seemed to be under the same delusion—but not so Fanny—she could too truly interpret the embarrassed and melancholy expression of Alberton's countenance; she saw that his eyes sedulously avoided meeting hers, and every expression that was uttered by the thoughtless Emma, seemed to increase his reserve and embarrassment. His reply, too, to Miss Rachel's invitation to stay and dine with them, was quite sufficient to convince Fanny that she was by no means to consider him as established on the same footing as formerly in the family.

"I should be most happy," he replied, "to accept your kind invitation, dear madam, but I fear that, should I do

so, Mr. Levison would think that I was taking advantage of his indulgence. It is long," he added, with a deep sigh, "since I have been allowed this privilege, and I must not venture to abuse it."

Fanny's downcast look, and her aunt's silent and thoughtful gaze, as if she would read what was passing in his mind, combined with his observation, appeared, at length, to awaken a suspicion in Mrs. Charles Levison's mind, that she had been too hasty in her anticipations; but her attempts at apology, rendered the subject still more painful to both Fanny and Alberton; and the latter was compelled, though unwillingly, to shorten his visit, in pity to Fanny's evident distress and confusion, having previously, however, intimated that he should take advantage of Mr. Levison's permission, and see them again on the following day.

The result of this visit was anxiously looked for, both on the part of Mr. Dormer and the Earl of Raeburn; but only to the former did Lord Alberton communicate all that had passed between him and Mr. Levison—for of Fanny, or of his own feelings, as connected with her, he felt it impossible to speak to his father, without recalling scenes and circumstances painful alike to both; while the latter, seeming equally desirous to bury the past in oblivion, avoided, as far as possible, any allusion to her, though at the same time he took care to let his son know that he was fully prepared to sanction his union with her, if he could induce Mr. Levison to consent to it.

To Mr. Dormer, the gloom and uneasiness which overspread the countenance of Lord Alberton, as he repeated to him Mr. Levison's determination, appeared quite groundless and unnecessary, for he believed the battle,

to use his own phrase, more than half won, in having brought Mr. Levison to listen to the subject; and he contended that the latter would never have consented to Alberton's unrestrained interview with Fanny, had he not made up his mind no longer to oppose their union.

"You will see I am right, my boy," he concluded, in high glee. "I know my old friend so well—his pride will for a short time struggle with his feelings, but they will at length conquer, and I shall at last have the pleasure of seeing all as it should be. I wish, though, we could keep them all in town a few weeks longer, that it might be settled at once."

"Not for the world, would I be the means of keeping Mr. Levison here," returned Lord Alberton, "since his physician declares that the only chance of saving him will be his native air."

"Psha, do not tell me of physicians," replied Mr. Dormer, gaily; "happiness is a more potent physician than any of the College; and, I will venture to prophesy that the sight of his darling Fanny, once more restored to her bloom and her smiles, and in the road to present him with a grandson, would do more for him than all the prescriptions of a dozen formal old fools, that do not know any thing about his complaint."

Contrary, however, to Mr. Dormer's predictions, Lord Alberton, on his second visit, found that Mr. Levison's disposition towards him had not improved; on the contrary, he manifested considerable coolness and testiness, and, at last, plainly informed him that he should be very well content to receive his visits, if it were not evident, that, though they were ostensibly paid to him, they were in reality only intended for his daughter.

"It would be hypocrisy, sir, which I am sure you would despise," returned Alberton, "if I were to say that I did not hope, when I entered this house, I should see Fanny. Yet, if you object to it, I will unrepiningly submit to your will; and hope, by so doing, you will allow me to devote more of my time to you."

"No, no—my dear boy—I cannot expect that," replied Mr. Levison, softened by the mildness and humility with which his young friend addressed him. "You have had your share of trouble and sorrow, and more than your share—at your age, I had never known what it was to grieve for an hour; and yet, I am sure, I was not half so deserving of happiness as you are. But, however, it would be very unreasonable to expect you to come to pass your hours with a fretful, sick old man, without something to compensate for it; and I am, I dare say, very unreasonable in being vexed at your seeing Fanny—only recollect what I have said, Denzil, and do not take advantage of the opportunities given her. She has always been an obedient child—do not you now tempt her to be otherwise!"

"I should despise myself, sir, were I capable of such a thought as abusing your confidence," replied Alberton, in a tone of despondency.

"Well, well, I can trust you," returned Mr. Levison, "and so you may go and seek her, if you will."

Lord Alberton accepted the permission—but it was with a heavy heart; and Fanny's tearful eyes, as she replied to his greeting, convinced him that her father had been equally explicit with her; and that therefore his intentions could no longer be liable to mistake. By degrees, the constraint and embarrassment, which uncer-

tainty on the one side, and the fear of misapprehension on the other, had given rise to, wore off; and Alberton once more felt himself at ease, and in perfect confidence with the long-worshipped idol of his affections.

Long and painfully interesting was the conversation that ensued—for Fanny had yet to learn many particulars of that sad story, of which she had hitherto heard only the outlines; and never had she appeared so lovely in the eyes of Alberton, as while weeping, with the tenderest commiseration, over the sorrows and sufferings of his unfortunate mother. Often, too, did a deep blush dye her cheek, as he delicately and distantly alluded to the error which had so long overclouded his prospects, and at times almost shaken reason from her seat; an error which had been so fixed in his mother's mind, that, even to the last moment of her life, she had been persuaded that she was right.

Of his future prospects, Alberton dared not now speak—but to Fanny his silence was eloquence; she felt that she was beloved—that she had ever been beloved—and she tried to shut out the future from her thoughts, and enjoy only her present happiness. But day after day glided away, and Mr. Levison became impatient to commence his journey—Mrs. Charles Levison was pronounced sufficiently strong to bear travelling, and no plea remaining for longer delay, Lord Alberton was compelled to hear from Mr. Levison that his next visit would be the last, as they should start at an early hour on the following morning.

"But, if I should visit the neighbourhood of the Hall, in the course of a few weeks, sir," demanded Alberton, "the doors of that hospitable residence, which sheltered my infancy, and——"

"If you should come, Alberton, I will not say that I would shut my doors against you," interrupted Mr. Levison; "but I should be very sorry to hear that it is the intention of the Earl of Raeburn to annoy me in my last retreat—by taking up his residence in my neighbourhood. Tell me, is that what you mean, when you ask permission to visit me?"

"It is not, sir—my father has never hinted such an intention—on the contrary, I believe the residence he possesses there, will, as soon as the necessary deeds can be prepared, become my property; and, in that event——"

Mr. Levison hesitated a moment, as Lord Alberton looked earnestly to him for an answer——"In that event," he returned, "we may meet again."

Even with this hope, however, the parting was one of deep and melancholy foreboding on all sides; but no one appeared more keenly to regret it, than Mrs. Charles Levison, who could not conceal her dissatisfaction at the thought of being removed, for an indefinite period, into the gloomy, dismal country.

"You will write to me, Fanny?" whispered Lord Alberton.

"I shall write to Rosa," replied Fanny, blushing, "and one letter will do for both—or, if I have anything particular to say, I will write to you," she added, recollecting herself, "I do not know why I should hesitate to do so."

"Nor I, indeed, dearest girl!" he returned, with a look of rapture.

Fanny's first letter, however, was addressed to Miss Somerville; and Lord Alberton was somewhat disappointed that it was so; yet, upon reading it, he could scarcely be surprised, for it contained the most mournful

predictions that the journey would not benefit her father, who had appeared to sink rapidly under the fatigue, though they had travelled very slowly, until the last day, when he became so impatient to reach the Hall, that he insisted on going on, though evidently very unequal to the task.

"The cause of this," continued Fanny, "was, it appears, his anxiety to meet his solicitor, Mr. Goodwin, who had been summoned to meet him, and was waiting our arrival. Weak and exhausted as he was, my poor father would not retire to his room, but remained in the drawing-room with Goodwin, to whom he has been giving instructions, which I suppose my poor cousin's death rendered necessary. They have been together now more than an hour, and I have taken the opportunity to write to you, as the post will go from hence to-night. When I write again, to-morrow, I fervently pray I may have better news for you!"

"What are you looking at, so earnestly, Rosa?" demanded Mr. Dormer, who saw that, while Lord Alberton was reading this hasty note, which she had given into his hands, she had carelessly taken up the envelope, and appeared at once surprised and agitated.

"Read, dear uncle!" she replied, at that moment giving him the paper. "My eyes seem dim—yet I fear that——"

"Good God! it is all over!" interrupted Mr. Dormer, who had cast his eyes over the words she pointed to in the envelope. "My poor old friend is dead!"

He then read aloud the intelligence, which was written,

it appeared, by Susan, Miss Levison's maid, and was as follows:

"MADAM,

"Having found this letter all ready to go by the post, on my lady's desk, I thought it best to send it, for fear you should be uneasy at not hearing from her, as she is not able to write another, on account of her great grief for the loss of my poor master, who died this evening, at seven o'clock, just after Miss Fanny had sealed her letter, having been taken speechless almost directly he got to his own home; and, indeed, we all thought he would have died on the road; but he had his wish granted, to live to reach his home, though not to finish what he was so anxious about—for, it seems, he was just beginning to give Mr. Goodwin his directions, when his speech failed him; and in less than an hour, he was no more—dying quite calm, and without a sigh—so easy, indeed, that we did not know exactly the minute that the breath left him. I have no more to add, but that we are all in great grief, and remain

"Your obedient servant,

"SUSAN PRICE."

"Poor, poor Fanny!" exclaimed Lord Alberton, after some moments of silent grief.

"And poor, poor Rachel," rejoined Mr. Dormer. "Our attempts to serve her have, it seems, been fruitless —and she has a double misfortune to mourn!"

"One, however, that I trust will be only nominal," returned Alberton, "and, fortunately, she is of too calm and easy a disposition, to suffer even real evils to prey

long upon her mind. But Fanny—so ardently, so affectionately attached to her father—her mind, too, already weakened by the late melancholy events——"

"It was unfortunate, most unfortunate," replied Mr. Dormer, still seeming to reflect upon the subject which he had before spoken of. "Yet, I trust, all will yet be well! Poor Levison," he continued, "the close of his life has been indeed a stormy one."

Lord Raeburn at this moment entered to pay his usual morning visit, and, with unfeigned sorrow, he heard the intelligence of Mr. Levison's death—sorrow which was considerably aggravated by the knowledge that the latter had never pardoned him, for the mortification which he had occasioned him.

"You will, of course, write to Fanny by return of post," said Lord Alberton, drawing Rosa aside.

She assented.

"Tell her then, dear Rosa, that not in words only, but in heart, do I deeply, sincerely sympathise with her —tell her that I mourn with her the loss of him who was indeed a father to me; and say, too, that, if I have her permission, and that of her respected aunt, I shall consider it my duty to come down immediately, and perform the last office of respect to his remains."

"But why not write yourself?" demanded Miss Somerville; "Fanny can have no reason——"

"Oh, no, I cannot, dare not trust myself to write now," he replied; and Rosa, ever ready to oblige, immediately promised to obey him.

To the great disappointment both of Miss Somerville and Lord Alberton, the next communication was from Mrs. Charles Levison. Fanny, she said, was still too

much agitated to write, and had commissioned her to reply to the former's letter.

Lord Alberton's offer was declined, for many reasons, which, the writer said, would be at some future time explained; but Mr. Dormer's presence was most anxiously desired, if he could bear the fatigue and trouble of the journey.

"Mamma, and my uncle Lazenby, who has just returned from South America, where we thought he had died ten years ago, are both here," continued Mrs. Charles Levison, "and have undertaken to superintend every thing—for poor aunt Rachel is quite overcome with grief, as well as Fanny. I am better myself than I could have expected, and the boy thrives astonishingly. Mamma and I are quite good friends, at present—but I don't know how long it will last.

"And now, dear Rosa, I've got a great secret to tell you—and, mind you don't tell any body, because mamma has charged me to say nothing about it yet. And poor Fanny does not know it, though she must know it too soon—and that is, that she is left without a farthing of fortune—for the first thing poor Mr. Levison did, when he got home, was to bid Goodwin throw the will he had made into the fire, and begin a new one; and, before he could finish three lines, the poor old man was taken speechless—so that there's no will, and poor Fanny being illegitimate, cannot claim anything. I am sure, for my part, I would willingly give her half my share—but, then, mamma and my uncle Lazenby say that it is not mine, but my little Charles's—so that, after all, what a fortune he will be heir to! Poor Fanny, you cannot think how I grieve for her—but she shall not want, that

I'll take care of, though mamma says it's fine talking, and I may marry again, and then——but I'm sure I don't think I ever shall marry again, though every body tells me I look more fascinating than ever, in my widow's weeds."

Lord Alberton, into whose impatient hands Rosa had given the letter, the moment it arrived, without even breaking the seal, now threw it from him with a vehemence that startled her.

"And my noble-minded, generous-hearted girl, to be at the mercy of such unfeeling——but I will not waste a thought on them! Where is your uncle, Rosa? I must see him, directly."

"I am here, Alberton—what is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Dormer, entering.

"Let Miss Somerville read that letter to you, sir—I cannot," he replied; "but I will await your decision, and then——"

"Read, read, Rosa;" interrupted Mr. Dormer. "I am all impatience!"

Miss Somerville read the letter aloud——not, however, without several interruptions from Mr. Dormer, whose surprise, indignation, and sorrow, were expressed with the utmost vehemence.

"Go!" he repeated; "yes, I would go to the world's end, in such a cause! And Frank Lazenby, too, the precious villain!—he, who after tiring out all his friends at home, and spending a fortune of other people's money, was glad to make his exit at the expense of my brother and myself——but the villain will not—dare not! Yes, yes—I will go—and put a stop, I trust, to their abominable schemes! Poor, poor girl! and it is all owing to

my interference, in favour of Rachel—but it cannot, shall not be! I will force them to do justice to both!"

"It is not the loss of fortune," observed Lord Alberton, when Mr. Dormer at length paused, "but it is the wound her feelings will receive—the insolent pity, the insulting commiseration of——"

"She shall not be exposed to it! They will not, surely, dare communicate to her the situation in which she stands, before the remains of her father are cold in their grave," returned Mr. Dormer; "and then I shall be there to shield her."

"And I am forbidden to interpose." observed Lord Alberton, in a tone of deep regret.

"It is, perhaps, better that you should not be there," replied Mr. Dormer after a few moments' reflection; "though, I confess, I do not see the necessity of your being forbidden—but as it is so, you cannot, with any propriety, go."

Lord Alberton was obliged to acquiesce in this decision; and, with a heavy heart, he beheld Mr. Dormer, accompanied only by his own man, depart by the mail the same evening for Cumberland.

CHAPTER XXXII.

> There is no traitor like
> He whose domestic treason plants the poniard
> Within the breast that trusted to his truth.—BYRON.

THE succession of melancholy and afflicting events, which Fanny Levison had been doomed to encounter within the last few months, had indeed rendered her very unequal to bear with fortitude the loss of her kind and indulgent father; but her grief, heavy as it was, seemed in this instance scarcely to equal that which overwhelmed the usually calm, resigned, and patient Rachel; and, for the first time, Fanny found herself called upon to act the part of a comforter and adviser to her, on whom she had herself been accustomed to lean, on all occasions of distress or difficulty.

It would be doing Miss Rachel injustice, to say that she was not a deep and sincere mourner for the brother to whom she had been from childhood tenderly attached; but it was not his death alone that she so bitterly mourned——for, as she had often, on similar occasions, observed—

> "Death is a debt we all must pay,
> And will come, when it will come;"

And therefore she would have considered it her duty to bear the bereavement with due submission; but, in this instance, she was aware that the blow had fallen at a moment the most unpropitious for the fate of those left

behind; and her tears, though apparently given to the dead, were in reality more than half bestowed upon the living.

She had, indeed, in the first moments of grief and terror at her brother's sudden decease, paid little attention to the solicitor's audible regrets for its having happened so inopportunely—at so peculiarly unfortunate a moment—but, when the first tumult of sorrow had a little subsided, and Fanny, ever the chief object of her anxiety, had yielded to her persuasions, and retired from the chamber of death, Mr. Goodwin's pointed remark, that nothing could have happened more unfortunately for the poor young lady, induced her to require an explanation; and she heard, with horror and consternation, that her brother's premature death had left the child of his love—her, for whose sake he had lived a life of privacy, heaping up yearly more than a third of his income, that he might leave her a splendid fortune—totally unprovided for—absolutely penniless, and dependant on the charity of his heir.

"And, by the will that he so obstinately insisted on my putting in the fire," concluded Mr. Goodwin, "every thing, with the exception of a few trifling legacies, and some annuities to his servants, was hers; and what he could want to make a new one for, I cannot surmise, except to appoint a guardian to the infant, who must, of course, inherit the estates——"

"Fanny must not know this, Mr. Goodwin, at present," interrupted the bewildered Rachel.

Goodwin protested he was only led to speak of it now, by his great respect for the young lady; and then retired, to make his court to one with whom he knew this secret

would be welcome.——To Mrs. Lazenby, the mercenary, purse-proud mother of Mrs. Levison, he proceeded without delay, to congratulate her upon the prospect that her grandson, upon attaining his majority, would be one of the richest commoners in England; there not being a single incumbrance on the property, but the widow's jointure, which had been settled upon her after her marriage.

In a few hours, Mrs. Lazenby, whose anxiety to see her daughter offered her a plausible excuse, arrived at the Hall, together with her brother-in-law, Francis Lazenby; and, after a proper display of sorrow and astonishment at the melancholy event, with which they affected to have been previously unacquainted, kindly undertook to superintend the arrangements, for which poor Rachel, for the first time in her life, acknowledged she was totally unfit.

The seeming kindness [illegible] and sympathy of Mrs. Lazenby, soon drew from the [illegible] unsuspicious old lady an avowal of the cause that s[illegible] welled her grief so much beyond its natural limits; [illegible] but Rachel still shrank from avowing that she was l[illegible] herself nearly destitute, until Mrs. Lazenby hinted th[illegible] that Fanny could not be considered very unfortunate, w[illegible] while she (Miss Rachel) possessed such ample means of c[illegible] compensating her for the loss—and then the truth br[illegible] ke out; and she acknowledged, with floods of tears, t[illegible] that her own handsome fortune was dwindled down to a [illegible] paltry annuity of less than a hundred a year.

"It will keep us from want, to be sure," continued the poor old lady, weeping bitterly; "and, if it were only myself, it would be plenty—but to think that I should live to see that dear girl——and to think, too, what she will suffer, when she comes to hear the whole truth."

Mrs. Lazenby was not naturally very prone to yield to the weakness of compassion—but she could not entirely suppress a slight feeling of the sort, towards the unsuspicious, open-hearted being, who thus confided her troubles to her; though at the same time she suppressed her knowledge of a fact, which would have had a much greater tendency to dry poor Miss Rachel tears, than the common-place condolements which she uttered upon the occasion.

It had not, indeed, escaped Mrs. Lazenby's recollection, though Miss Rachel appeared unacquainted with the [illegible] that she was entitled to a share of her brother's property, however, Mrs. Lazenby [illegible] which would effectually place her beyond time enough, she thought, to surr[illegible] and enable her to provide for her it could be no longer held. And she [illegible] of her death. On this point to speak of the infant Charles, as the und[illegible] ined silent; it would be all the late Mr. Levison's property, adroitly [illegible] der an advantage, which time lamenting that his guardians, of whom of [illegible] therefore continued was one, would not have it in their power to do w[illegible] doubted her [illegible] hearts would dictate, since they must be account[illegible] at the same [illegible] course she [illegible] but their [illegible] able to [illegible] him for every farthing of his property.

The threatened visit of Lord Alberton, however, p[illegible] to flight all Mrs. Lazenby and her brother-in-law [illegible] schemes. They knew that though the simple-minded Rachel might be cajoled, it was not likely that Lord Alberton, who, they were informed by Emma, was still devotedly attached to Fanny, would be silent where her interest was so deeply concerned; but, contrary to their expectations, and from a motive completely beyond their com-

prehension, Fanny expressed herself decidedly against accepting Lord Alberton's offer; and Rachel, to whom her wish was law, commissioned Mrs. Charles Levison to convey the rejection of it, as kindly as possible. The invitation to Mr. Dormer was entirely an interpolation by Emma. She was already sick of the domination of her mother and uncle Lazenby, though without the spirit to oppose it, or the address to devise any other plan to extricate herself, than bringing down her other uncle, Mr. Dormer, who was also the trustee of her marriage-settlement, and by whose interference she hoped to be able to accomplish her plan of returning to London.

Not even Lord Alberton himself could have been more unwelcome than Mr. Dormer, when he unexpectedly entered, unannounced, the room where Mrs. Lazenby was, with her daughter and brother-in-law; the latter of whom had still more cogent reasons than herself, for wishing the intruder away.

Both, however, possessed too much shrewdness not to dissemble their chagrin—but Mrs. Lazenby knew too well the character of Mr. Dormer, to hope that she could deceive or cajole him; and she shrunk with dismay before his keen eye, as he questioned her respecting the intelligence which Emma's letter had conveyed.

His commendation of her silence on the subject to Fanny, however, somewhat re-assured her, and she retired to prepare, as she said, Miss Rachel and Fanny to see him, but in reality to recover from her own consternation and surprise.

The sight of one who had been the intimate, and, until within a short period, the most confidential friend of her father, revived for a time the most poignant sen-

sations of grief in Fanny's bosom; but she became at length more at ease, and conversed with him until she received a hint from Mr. Dormer that she would leave her aunt and himself together; which Fanny immediately complied with, and poor Miss Rachel had the satisfaction of bewailing to his friendly ear the downfall of Fanny's golden prospects.

"It matters little whether Fanny has a few thousands less or more," he returned, "for she will not be less valuable, I know, in Alberton's sight. Not that I myself consider money in so trivial a light—but he has plenty, and he can please himself; and as to you, my old friend, I do not imagine you will have much cause to complain—for your brother must have saved a good round sum, and that you are, of course, entitled to share with the heir."

Rachel was astonished—but she acknowledged it had taken a weight off her mind, the heaviest she had ever felt; not for her own sake, but Fanny's; and she then proceeded, with evident satisfaction, to state that her brother had on one occasion mentioned to her that Fanny's fortune would not be less than fifty thousand pounds.

"That is double what I expected," replied Mr. Dormer; "and will enable you, with a little of my assistance, to save the poor girl the mortification of knowing anything about it."

Rachel was willing to trust all to his management—but he acquiesced in her observation, that all must be deferred until after the funeral; and that the only point to be attended to, was to preserve the secrecy hitherto kept on the subject towards Fanny.

On the following day, the remains of Mr. Levison were deposited in the family vault, amid the tears and

prayers of many who had been the objects of his steady benevolence; and the next morning, Mr. Dormer, having prevailed on Fanny to accompany Mrs. Charles Levison into the garden, proposed to Miss Rachel a formal examination into her brother's affairs, Mr. Goodwin having been summoned for that purpose.

Mr. Goodwin, however, either did not, or would not know anything more than that he believed the deceased Mr. Levison held considerable property in the funds; for which, of course, the necessary documents would be found, either in his cabinet or in his strong-box, which, of course, was in Miss Rachel's possession.

"You had better examine those places at once," observed Mr. Dormer, addressing Rachel.

"You have all the keys, Mrs. Lazenby," said Rachel, looking at the latter.

Mrs. Lazenby arose.

"They are in my dressing-room," she observed, "I will fetch them."

Mr. Dormer muttered to himself, in a dissatisfied voice——"Mr. Levison used to keep a very large sum by him—for he told me so; and I tried to persuade him to discontinue the practice," he added, in a louder tone, addressing Mr. Goodwin.

"It might be so, sir—but I had no opportunities of knowing—Mr. Levison was very singular in his habits—very suspicious—and I know but little of his affairs, though I have been his legal adviser for more than twenty years."

Mrs. Lazenby returned——

"I cannot find the keys," she observed, "and, indeed, upon consideration, I rather think I must have carried

them home with me, when I went there on Thursday, and have left them there."

Mr. Dormer looked displeased, but the negligence could, as Mrs. Lazenby observed, be remedied in a few hours; and a messenger was dispatched to request Mr. Francis Lazenby, who had returned to his sister's residence immediately after the funeral, to search into the places indicated by her.

The messenger returned—Mr. Lazenby had gone on a shooting excursion for some days; but the housekeeper had made the necessary search, and the result was, that the keys were not there.

"This is strange, unaccountable negligence!" observed Mr. Dormer, in an angry tone, looking at Mrs. Lazenby.

The lady indignantly replied, and a quarrel seemed likely to ensue, which was only prevented by Mrs. Charles Levison's entering the room with the lost keys, which she had found upon the seat of an arbor, at the bottom of the garden.

Mrs. Lazenby coloured violently—it was impossible that she could now vindicate herself from the charge of carelessness, for she must undoubtedly have laid them there.

So said Mr. Dormer, as he took them from Emma, and proceeded to open the cabinet, in which Mr. Levison had been accustomed to deposit his valuables.

It was empty, or at least its contents were only valueless papers, which appeared to have been recently thrown together in confusion, by some person who had ransacked the contents.

"Are you sure," said Mr. Dormer, addressing Miss Rachel, "that it was here that your brother——"

"Sure?" she repeated, with astonishment, "the last words I ever heard my poor brother utter, was a direction to me to open this cabinet, and let Thomas place in it the box, which was brought from the carriage. I saw it done—locked it—and gave the keys to my brother, in the presence of Mr. Goodwin."

"You did so, madam," observed Goodwin, who had till this moment remained silent.

"Then there has been foul play!" said Mr. Dormer; "of that, there can be no further doubt—and your negligence, culpable negligence, Mrs. Lazenby, has supplied the means of carrying it into effect!"

Mrs. Lazenby sat down silent, and in the most painful confusion; and Mr. Dormer, after a few moments' reflection, crossed the room to her, and addressed her in a low voice.

"Have you nothing to guide your suspicions on this subject?" he demanded. "Have you any recollection of having the keys where they were found?"

"I have never been there at all," she replied; "but I feared to say so, at first, for my mind misgave me that it would turn out that some improper use had been made of them—for I know that they were in reality locked in my dressing-case."

"And who had access to that," demanded Mr. Dormer, "besides yourself?"

"No one, of course, but Catherine, my maid," she replied.

"Let Catherine be called," said Mr. Dormer, quickly.

"She went home to prepare for my return, last night," observed Mrs. Lazenby.

"The plot thickens, I see," returned Mr. Dormer,

It was some time before either Rachel or Fanny could be brought to believe, or to comprehend the whole truth —so difficult was it for them to imagine it possible that any one, bearing the character and rank of a gentleman, could have been guilty of such an act.

It was, however, too true—and Mr. Dormer, while he detailed the measures he had taken to effect, if possible, the apprehension of the delinquent—having sent off an express to London, and intending to depart thither early in the morning, acknowledged that he had little hopes, from the circumstance of his being so many hours in advance of them, that the villain would be taken.

Mortified, as she evidently was, at having been the means of introducing her unworthy relative, and therefore given him the opportunity of effecting his scandalous robbery, Mrs. Lazenby appeared to suffer still more from the publicity which the means Mr. Dormer had adopted, and intended to pursue, was likely to give to the affair; and she resented what she styled his precipitancy, with so much intemperance of language, that Mr. Dormer became at length provoked, and retaliated upon her so warmly, that she quitted the room, observing that she should not return to it, until he had left it.

Fanny would have interposed her good offices to reconcile them, but Mrs. Lazenby flounced away, without deigning to listen to her.

"Let her alone, my dear," observed Mr. Dormer. "I have but little time to remain, and that can be much better employed than in quarrelling with a foolish self-opinionated woman."

Mr. Dormer had, indeed, a subject of much more importance to occupy his thoughts; for he felt it incumbent

upon him, before he quitted the aunt and niece, to place before them the extent of their situation, and induce them, if possible, to accept an asylum with him for the present, and thus prevent the possibility of having their feelings wounded by being made to feel that they were no longer the mistresses of the Hall.

It was some time before Fanny could bring herself to believe that what she heard was correct. On her own situation she had never for a moment reflected—for her sorrow had been too deep, to allow her to trouble herself with pecuniary concerns; but though she knew, from her father's often-repeated observations, that his landed estates would descend to his male heir, it had never occurred to her mind that her aunt would not still remain the mistress of the Hall; and she now appeared shocked at the idea that the latter should be expected to give up the station she had filled for so many years, and would literally have to seek a new home. But, even now, she knew not the full extent of the evil, for Rachel's expressive silence on the subject of the loss of her fortune, constrained Mr. Dormer also to avoid speaking of it.

With regard to his proposal of returning to London, and residing with him and his niece for the present, Rachel declined giving a positive answer, observing that Fanny and her would talk the subject over, when they became a little more calm and composed, and let him know their determination in a few days; and, with this assurance, Mr. Dormer quitted them, in order to take as much rest as he could, before he commenced his journey to the metropolis.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

His years but young, but his experience old—
His head unmellow'd, but his judgment ripe—
And, in a word——
——Complete in feature and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.—SHAKESPEARE.

THE return of Mr. Dormer to town, while it in some measure relieved Lord Alberton's anxiety regarding Fanny's health, gave him also considerable uneasiness on her account; for he feared Miss Rachel's unsuspicious disposition, added to the natural disinclination which she must, of course, feel to quit her home, would induce her to put more faith in the professions of kindness which she might at present receive from Mrs. Lazenby, than they deserved, and thus, perhaps, expose herself and Fanny to mortification.

All attempts failed to trace Francis Lazenby, after his arrival in London with the unfortunate girl, whom he had seduced to join in his nefarious plans; but Mr. Dormer had the satisfaction to find that there remained in the hands of the late Mr. Levison's banker, a considerably larger sum than he had anticipated; and this, of course, Rachel was entitled to share with the infant heir.

The termination of Fanny and her aunt's residence at Levison Hall was, however, much nearer than either Mr. Dormer or Lord Alberton apprehended; for, in reply to the first letter of the former to Rachel, she requested him not to write again until he heard from her, as Fanny and herself intended to leave the Hall in a few

days, and had not yet determined which way they should bend their course.

Lord Alberton and his father were together, when Mr. Dormer came with the letter containing this intelligence, and though it had hitherto seemed a tacit agreement not to speak of Fanny Levison before the Earl, Mr. Dormer's vexation now got the better of all reserve, and he execrated Mrs. Lazenby's conduct, declaring that he would never acknowledge her as his sister again, if he found that she had been the means of this sudden resolution.

A full explanation of all that had occurred since the death of Mr. Levison, was now entered into by Mr. Dormer, in consequence of the questions which were asked by the Earl, who at once avowed his intention to write to Miss Rachel immediately, and offer to her and her niece the use of the mansion he had purchased, but never seen, within a few miles from Levison Hall.

Mr. Dormer shook his head.

"You may try your powers of persuasion, my lord," he observed; "but I am very much mistaken in the character of Fanny Levison, if you succeed."

"And why not?" demanded the Earl. "Do you think that she is as implacable as her father, and that my sins are never to be forgiven?"

"I do not believe that Fanny has ever felt a moment's resentment against you," returned Mr. Dormer. "In fact, that which was your crime in my poor old friend's eyes, was in hers your greatest merit—since it was the means of rescuing her——"

"We will spare the remainder, my good sir," interrupted the Earl, smiling, though evidently not exactly

pleased; "I perfectly anticipate the compliment you were about to pay me. However, I am very happy to hear that she has no personal resentment towards me; and now I should like to know what motive you suppose will be likely to actuate her refusal of my offer."

"I will tell you then, candidly, that I do not believe she will accept any favour from you, at present. I mean to say, that her pride will recoil from being indebted to you, for many reasons, which must be sufficiently obvious."

"Then it will be a false pride," returned the Earl; "for never—never can I repay the obligation which her father conferred on me, in the person of my son."

"Well, there can be no objection to your trying the experiment, certainly," replied Mr. Dormer; "and, even if it does not succeed, I would not have you despair —a time will come, I have no doubt, when you may be able to relieve yourself of all obligation."

The significant smile with which this was uttered, and the cordial assenting one with which it was received by the Earl, did not escape Lord Alberton, who, interested as he was in the conversation, had not attempted to interfere; but who now felt considerable satisfaction in the certainty, which was thus conveyed to him, that his father would not view the loss of Fanny's fortune as rendering her a less eligible daughter-in-law than she would otherwise have been.

Though convinced the time was not very far distant when every obstacle would be removed that now existed between him and the object of his love, Alberton could not, without extreme pain, contemplate the situation in which she was placed. He had ever been on excellent terms with Mrs. Charles Levison, over whom

he perhaps possessed more influence than any other person; and he now, after some reflection with himself, resolved to write to her, at the same time that his father addressed Miss Rachel, and endeavour by this means to learn how matters really stood.

Miss Levison's reply to the Earl was as Mr. Dormer had predicted, a decisive, though polite, and indeed even friendly, rejection of his offer; alleging, as a motive for it, that she considered that should she and Fanny remain so immediately in the neighbourhood, it would only serve to keep alive remembrances which it must now be their study to forget.

From Mrs. Charles Levison, too, Lord Alberton received, as he had requested, an immediate reply; in which, after discussing at full length several other topics, which were anything but interesting to him, she proceeded——

"I know, dear Denzil (you must forgive my still calling you by that name, for I cannot, for the life of me, think of you by any other,) I know, I say, that you are all impatience to know about Fanny—and so I will tell you at once, that Fanny is most unaccountably going to leave me, to take a tour—nobody knows where—with aunt Rachel! Did you ever hear such preposterous nonsense! for them to go off on such a scheme, who never were trusted, as mamma says, to make a pilgrimage farther than the next village, without having some one to direct and assist them! Poor uncle Levison, if he could look out of his grave, would, I am sure, be frightened at the very thought of such a thing! But, however, it is so—and I have just received a very formal notice from aunt Rachel, that they shall start at six to-morrow morning! Now I can't but think that this is all downright nonsense—

for, as mamma told aunt Rachel, she was quite welcome to make Levison Hall her home, if it was for six months to come; and, you know, there is plenty of room for all of us, without at all interfering with one another! But, I don't know how it was, from the moment mamma spoke on the subject, and mentioned that it was my wish, as well as hers, that she and Fanny should retain all their present apartments, only considering the great drawing-room mine, as it was not probable they would receive much company—from that moment, aunt Rachel became cool and distant; and, in a day or two after, this ridiculous tour was mentioned.

"Now—between you and I—for you know I always tell you all I think—I have always set it down that the match between Fanny and you was as good as concluded; and therefore I considered that it would be convenient to all parties that Fanny should remain here, until the time arrives when you can with propriety address her. Mamma, however, who judges every body by herself, will have it that Earl Raeburn will never consent to your marrying a girl without either birth or fortune—and I fancy it was mamma's expressing her sorrow to aunt Rachel, that poor Fanny was again thrown out of a good match, that gave the good old lady such violent offence——"

Lord Alberton had with difficulty controlled his indignation and impatience whilst reading the first part of this epistle—but the last sentence completely destroyed his small remains of temper; and, in a transport of rage, he tore it into fragments, and threw it indignantly on the floor.

The next moment, however, he repented this impetuosity—for he remembered that he had yet to learn what

direction the travellers intended to take; and this was probably the very next piece of information Emma had thought proper to give him, and certainly all that could be valuable to him.

To collect together, and connect the torn pieces, now became his task—and he was still busily employed at it, when Mr. Dormer and Miss Somerville were announced.

Rosa's eye glanced, with evident surprise and curiosity, at his employment, and with no small degree of vexation, and considerable confusion, he threw the fragments into his desk—thus again rendering fruitless all the pains he had been taking.

It was impossible, however, for him to recover his self-possession so completely as to elude Mr. Dormer's observation; and the latter, readily comprehending that on one subject only it was probable Alberton's equanimity would be so shaken, took the first opportunity of leading to it, by inquiring whether Lord Raeburn had received the expected communication from Miss Rachel Levison.

Lord Alberton replied in the affirmative, and then, as if glad of the opportunity of giving the explanation which his friend's looks demanded, he added——

"And I have been favoured, too, with a long letter from Emma, which I——"

"Had not patience to read as a whole, and therefore reduced into parts," said Mr. Dormer, laughing. "I guessed as much—indeed, to tell you the truth, I *knew* as much; for Fanny has written to Rosa by the same conveyance, and she mentioned that Mrs. Charles Levison was busily engaged in writing to you."

Alberton's eyes brightened—"Then it is in Miss Somerville's power, probably, to give me that information

which my foolish impetuosity prevented me from receiving," he observed, looking at her.

"If you mean, as to the route Fanny and her aunt will take, or rather have taken," returned Rosa, "I am sorry to say, I am as little informed as yourself; but she has promised to write from the first place that they make any considerable stay at, and with this, I suppose, you must, as well as me, be content. As to Emma, she could not, I am sure, give you any information, except that their first stage would be Carlisle; but whether they would then go to the north, or to the south, she knows no more than I do."

With this, per force, Lord Alberton was compelled to be content—if it could be called contentment—to pass every hour in conjecturing and calculating probabilities as to the course they would take, and the time that would or might elapse, before Fanny would take compassion on the uneasiness she must know he was suffering, by writing to her friend Rosa.

Week after week, however, passed away, without this desirable moment arriving; and to complete, as it seemed, his uneasiness, now almost amounting to despair,—Mr. Dormer's health became so seriously affected, that his physician advised him to try a few months' residence in a warmer climate, and he determined to go at once to Italy, not caring, as he said, to revisit France, which had been the scene of one of his greatest afflictions—the loss of his amiable wife; and being also anxious to afford his niece the opportunity she had often wished for—of completing her studies in music and painting in the land of the fine arts.

It was impossible for Lord Alberton to form a

wish that his friend should delay, even for a day, a journey which promised to benefit him; but the thought that he should now be still farther removed from the probability of gaining intelligence of her who still occupied his every thought, added tenfold keenness to the pangs of suspense and anxiety which he now suffered.

Up to the last hour, indeed, that Mr. Dormer and his niece remained in London, a hope still lingered that the promised communication might yet arrive, before they quitted it; but the moment which beheld their carriage drive from the door of their house, on the steps of which he lingered till they were out of sight, seemed to consign him to hopeless despair; and he returned home so utterly wretched, spiritless, and woe-begone, that his father both felt and expressed his anxiety and uneasiness at his appearance.

Every hour that the Earl of Raeburn had passed with his son, had endeared the latter to him; for every hour gave more striking proofs of the amiable qualities of his mind. There were moments, indeed, when the Earl shrunk, with something like a painful sense of inferiority, from his noble-minded son; but the sensation soon gave way to the more amiable feeling of parental pleasure and pride, and he would mentally acknowledge his gratitude to the all-gracious power which had conferred on him the blessing of a son, who would be the prop of his declining years, and the honourable representative of his otherwise extinct name.

Scarcely less than himself, therefore, did the father of Lord Alberton regret the dark cloud which Fanny's false pride had thrown across the brilliant prospects of the latter. It was in vain that he tried to re-assure his son,

by pointing out the improbability that Rachel would consent to withdraw herself from all her former connexions; and that therefore, sooner or later, they could not fail to discover their retreat. Alberton, though he tried to appear convinced, in secret felt what he considered a presentiment that Fanny was lost to him for ever, and yielded to a despair which his looks betrayed, though his tongue refused to acknowledge it.

Anxious, if possible, to divert his son from perpetually dwelling on the theme of his disappointment, Lord Raeburn now resolved no longer to delay the introduction of the latter to the circle of his friends, from whom he had hitherto, on the plea of precarious health, continued secluded; and Alberton, not much to his satisfaction, soon found himself the object of universal attention, and involved in a round of visits and engagements, which scarcely left him a moment to himself.

Nearly all the Earl's connexions were military men, many of high distinction, and others indebted less to the goods of rank and wealth, than to their own personal recommendation, but all possessing a title to the respect and good opinion of Lord Alberton, from their having shared the toils, the perils, and the honours which had ennobled his father.

Nothing, indeed, to him was so attractive, or could so completely win him from the contemplation of the sorrow which preyed upon his mind, as the soul-stirring and captivating narratives and reminiscences which this reunion between his father and his former companions in arms gave occasion to; yet there were sometimes traits of indifference to the fate of their fellow-creatures—a reckless hardihood, which seemed to disdain taking into

account the miseries they inflicted, or the blood which was the price of their glory, even in the details of the most amiable and liberal of these old campaigners, that made him shudder, and in secret rejoice that his kind and benevolent friend, who was now no more, had successfully combated his inclination, when a youth, to embrace the military profession. It was true that they all declared that they, at their outset in the service, felt precisely as he did now; but that did not alter the matter; for Lord Alberton would not have exchanged his feelings for their apathy, even to have attained the highest honours that could have been bestowed on him.

Most ardently, therefore, did he wish to be released from society so uncongenial; and with no small pleasure he at length received from the Earl an intimation that he was himself heartily tired of London, and should have no objection to leave it, for whatever part of the country he (Denzil) should think fit.

"I suppose, however," observed the Earl, smiling, "you will not take long to decide whether our course shall be north or south?"

"You have never been in Cumberland, I think, my lord," returned Alberton.

"No, and you are desirous, I know, to introduce me to the beauties of your favorite county," replied the Earl. "Well, be it so—I shall leave you to make what arrangements you think proper, and we will start as soon after Monday next as you like. I cannot go before, as I dine that day with General Danvers."

"Tuesday, then, perhaps will be inconvenient," observed Lord Alberton, "at least, if you sit as late there as you did, when the General and his nephew dined here last."

"And I cannot promise that I will not," replied the Earl; "for it is difficult to preserve good resolutions, in such society; and, to tell you the truth, Alberton, that is the principal reason why I wish to quit London—for I am quite conscious that my constitution does not improve by this course of living, and I shall be glad of a decent excuse to break it off."

Lord Alberton had indeed beheld, with sorrow, the inroads that indulgence in the pleasures of society had made in his father's health and appearance; and, though he had not ventured to remonstrate, he now candidly acknowledged his pleasure at hearing the Earl himself avow his intention of putting a stop to it.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

> Speak no more——
> Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
> And there I see such black and grained spots,
> As will not leave their tinct.—SHAKESPEARE.

THE last day of Lord Alberton's residence in London was, much to his satisfaction, fast approaching—yet his spirits were unaccountably depressed, and Earl Raeburn readily undertook to excuse his accompanying him to the dinner at General Danvers's.

The day had been wet and cheerless, and Alberton, deprived of his usual exercise out of doors, felt the time drag languidly on, Earl Raeburn having left home at an early hour for Richmond, where the General resided.

The solitary dinner-table did not tend either to remove his listlessness and depression, and he almost wished that he had accompanied the Earl, rather than pass a solitary evening. Suddenly he recollected that the play for the evening at Covent Garden was "*She Stoops to Conquer.*" It was a favorite comedy with Fanny Levison, and they had once together witnessed its representation, during the first week of their residence in London, before "sorrow had laid its with'ring touch" on either of them; and the remembrance of that happy evening now rushed fresh upon his memory.

"Does it rain, Ned?" he inquired of his servant.

Ned replied in the negative, and then, after a moment's hesitation, added——

"I was thinking, my lord, of asking you, if you don't want me to-night, as it will be the last night as I *can* go, an' may be I'll never come to Lunnun again, if you'll please to spare me to go to the play—because it's the very same play as we all went to see, when my poor old master was alive. I think I see him now, sitting behind Miss Fanny and you in the box, and Mr. Charles spied me out in the gallery, and pointed me out to his uncle, and the good old gentleman nodded and laughed at me, because you know, Mr. Denzil—that is, my lord—you all used to call me *Tony Lumpkin*, and I never knew what it meant till that night—not that I think I was ever such a simpleton as that, neither, tho' he was cunning enough, too. Howsomever, I should like to see the play again, for certain, though it will make me melancholy to think——"

"You are quite at liberty to go, Ned," interrupted Lord Alberton, who already felt but too keenly the con-

trast which the honest fellow was about to draw. "You may go, as soon as you like—but take care you do not get into a scrape—as, if I recollect right, you did that night."

"Oh, no, my lord, I have learned too much of London ways since that," observed Ned, colouring to the eyes at this proof of his master's retentive memory. Lord Alberton smiled, and Ned, having pocketed the silver which was intended to heal this trifling wound, made his parting bow.

"I cannot go there," thought Alberton, after his departure. Ned's graphic powers, humble as they were, had brought too forcibly before his view the bright picture which was now so fatally obscured; and he felt that it would now be impossible for him to listen and enjoy the mirthful scene, which he had once beheld under such different circumstances. Yet to pass a long, long evening with no other companion than his own troubled thoughts and melancholy retrospections, was impossible. It was a tragedy at Drury Lane, and that would "suit the gloomy habit of his soul;" and so, without further delay, he departed, on foot, for the latter theatre.

The play was "*Othello*," and Lord Alberton soon lost, in his sympathy with the sufferings of the gallant unsuspicious Moor, all consciousness of his own sorrows.

The house was very full, and it was with difficulty that Alberton contrived to procure a seat in the second circle. There were several females on the seats before him; but Alberton's attention, from his first entrance, which was during Othello's address to the senate, had been wholly engrossed by the stage, and at the conclusion of the act it was claimed by a gentleman who had

recognised him from another box, and now came round to him.

"How came it that you did not go to Richmond, to-day, my lord?" demanded this young man, who was nephew to General Danvers, and himself an officer in the Guards.

"I shall echo your question," said Alberton, smiling —"how came it that you did not go?"

"Oh, a previous engagement," replied Lieutenant Danvers. "I had promised to stay in town, to attend my mother and sisters to see Kean; and, as I do not often perform such an act of filial duty, I would not, on this occasion, disappoint them; but, tell me," and he lowered his voice, "who are those two pretty women on the front seat? You know them, do you not? at least, I read in their eyes and their whispers, when you entered the box, that they knew you."

Alberton was surprised; but one of the ladies turned her head at that moment, and he instantly recognised Mrs. Wilmington. It was the first time she had caught his eyes, and he now hastily averted them, as a thousand painful remembrances rushed into his mind.

The next moment he found himself almost unconsciously making his way out of the box.

"Where the deuce are you hurrying to, my lord?" demanded Lieutenant Danvers. "Surely there is no danger in the glance of those bright eyes, that you look so grave, and are so anxious to get away."

"To me there is none, I assure you;" replied Alberton, trying to hide his feelings from one who he knew was incapable of sympathising with them.

"Would you infer that there is to me, then?" re-

turned Danvers, laughing. "Well, I am willing to abide by the consequences, if you will introduce me; though it is not the black-eyed beauty that has so powerfully hit my fancy," he continued, "but that blue-eyed blonde, with her glossy, auburn ringlets, that sits beside her. Tell me, Alberton, is she, too, an acquaintance of yours?"

"The ladies are sisters," replied Alberton, who had now discovered that the other, of whom he spoke, was Ellen Delaney; "but I do not wish to claim the honour of their acquaintance, I assure you," he added, in a contemptuous tone.

"Shall I be committing a mortal offence, if I introduce myself, then, as an acquaintance of yours?" said the thoughtless Danvers.

"They will receive you quite as kindly, if you omit my name altogether," returned Alberton. "In short, I will be plain with you, Mr. Danvers; they, or, at least, one of them, for I know nothing of the youngest, whom I have not seen for more than two years, but the eldest, Mrs. Wilmington, is a woman whose character I so utterly despise, that——"

Danvers was gone before he could finish the sentence, and the next minute he saw him smilingly seated between the two sisters.

Vexed and unhinged by this rencontre, and not liking to resume his seat in the same box, he wandered round the back of the boxes, until at length he found a vacant place, at the opposite side to that which he had left, and was thus enabled to observe what passed.

Danvers, he saw, was quite on easy terms with the two ladies, who were very elegantly dressed, and seemed

to attract very general attention and admiration; but Alberton turned from them, with unequivocal disgust. He thought of the wretched father, a lost, degraded criminal, writhing under the lash of justice,—of the mother, deserted and despised by the children whom she had assisted to contaminate,—their dress, their beauty, their allurements, were to him but as the gilded pomp of the sepulchre, which hides the loathsomeness within; and, with a sigh of mingled pity and contempt, he withdrew his attention entirely from them, to fix it upon the stage.

The play was concluded, and Lord Alberton not feeling in the humour to relish the farce, after the sublime display of scenic excellence he had just witnessed, buttoned his coat closely around him, and prepared to face the rain, which he had just heard was coming down in torrents.

During the latter part of the tragedy, his attention had been so totally absorbed by the scene, that he had forgotten Mrs. Wilmington, and all connected with her; but at the moment he was quitting the box, he turned an inquiring glance towards the spot where they had been stationed.

They were gone, and their seats occupied by others—and, without bestowing another thought on them, he hastened through the lobby, which was now filled with those who, like him, were not inclined to have the impressions of Kean's powerful appeals to the tender passions weakened by staying to witness a broad farce; but whom the rain prevented from immediately leaving the house.

Lord Alberton, however, pressed on, regardless of the elements; and was already on the step of the door, when

his attention was arrested by the well-known voice of Mrs. Wilmington, who, he now saw, was endeavouring to shake off the grasp of a miserably-clad man, who prevented her following her sister and Danvers, who were seated in a hackney coach.

"You are my wife, Julia," observed the wretched man, "I am starving, and you are living in luxury—but you shall not quit me, now I have got you, and the laws of the land will force you to share my fate—let it be what it may! So, come along, for with me you shall go, I am determined!"

"Leave me, you horrid wretch! will nobody help me? the man is mad! I know nothing about him!" she exclaimed, struggling to free herself from his grasp.

"No, no, I am not mad—you are Julia Wilmington, and I am George Wilmington, your husband—and it is of no use for you to try any of your fine airs now, with me! You have shunned me, and refused to help me, and made me desperate—and now you must take the consequences of it!"

A few words in the mean time had passed between Danvers and his companion, and the coach in which they were seated went off as fast as the horses could go.

"Ellen! Ellen!" screamed Mrs. Wilmington, "surely you will not leave me to the mercy of this wretch!"—but Ellen was deaf to her cries. Totally heartless, and reckless of all that did not immediately affect herself, she had persuaded Danvers that it was best to leave her sister to settle the affair with her unworthy husband, who, she observed, only wished to take advantage of his being with them, to extort money; and would, in all probability, release her, as soon as he found they were gone.

Several persons, in spite of the heavy rain that was still falling, had now collected round Mrs. Wilmington and her husband, who still kept his firm hold of her arm —but no one ventured to interfere; for the man's decided manner of asserting his right to claim her as his wife, seemed to carry conviction with it, while the striking contrast in their appearance confirmed his assertion that she was living in luxury, while he was starving—and thus prevented the slightest emotion of pity or interest in her favour.

"Good heavens! will no one assist a defenceless woman?" she wildly exclaimed. "I shall be murdered, if——oh, Denzil!—Lord Alberton!" she screamed, at this moment discovering him, as he still stood on the threshold of the door. "Save me! save me from this wretch!"

"I have no right to interfere between you and your husband, Mrs. Wilmington," returned Alberton, coolly; "but, as I suppose his only object in claiming you, at the present moment, is to get money; and as he certainly appears to want it, I would advise you to——"

"What right have you to suppose, sir, that I have no other object?" interrupted the man, fiercely.

"Because I have seen you before to-day, Mr. Wilmington," returned Lord Alberton, significantly. "If you will recal to your mind your conversation with your wife, in Paris, some twelve months since, and its consequences, you will perhaps feel that no farther exposition of your character is necessary."

Wilmington's fierceness and effrontery seemed now entirely to desert him—he looked for a moment as if undetermined whether he should not at once relinquish his

captive, and make good his retreat; but the exultation which his wife's manner displayed, at this unexpected interference in her favour, had quite a contrary effect to what she intended it to produce, and instead of being intimidated, he became more hardened and determined.

"Well, sir," he replied, looking steadfastly at Lord Alberton, "if you are, as it appears, acquainted with those circumstances, you must be quite aware that I am not one who am disposed tamely to be bamboozled; and that, clever as this lady thinks herself, she will find me more than a match for her."

"I suspect she will," said Alberton, coolly; "and it is for that reason I advise her to make terms with you, rather than trust herself in your power."

"But I have no money—not a shilling!" observed Mrs. Wilmington, bursting into tears, "not a single shilling!"

"It is bestowing it for a very unworthy purpose," said Lord Alberton, drawing his purse from his pocket; "nevertheless, if two or three pounds will satisfy him, I will advance it."

"You are very generous, undoubtedly," replied Wilmington, with a sneer, "but I am not quite so easily put off—you cannot expect that I shall part with such a valuable wife, for such a trifle."

"You are a shameless fellow," observed Lord Alberton. "Had you told me at once that that sum was insufficient for your necessities, I would have increased it; but, as it is, I will not be made a dupe, and I will have nothing farther to do with you—your wife will best consult her own safety, by placing herself under the protection of a peace-officer."

He was in the act of turning away, and placing the purse in his pocket, when Wilmington, suddenly quitting his hold of his wretched wife, rushed ferociously upon him; and Alberton, totally unprepared for the attack, staggered a few paces and fell.

The two or three persons whom curiosity had still kept together, to see the conclusion of the affair, instantly ran to his assistance; but Wilmington had disappeared down some of the adjoining turnings, and it was not until some moments after he had regained his feet and his recollection, which the stunning blow he had received, had, for the moment dissipated, that Alberton discovered that his purse and not himself had been the object of his attack—and that his money had disappeared with his assailant.

"It's a bad concern, altogether, I'm thinking," observed one of the by-standers, looking significantly at Mrs. Wilmington; who, mortified, frightened, wet, and shivering, had retreated under the porch of the front entrance, and seemed at a loss what to do with herself. "It's a bad look-out, altogether—and if I was you, sir, I would just give the woman in charge, for it's ten to one but it's all a mix-up between 'em."

"No, no! I believe I can with conscience acquit her," observed Lord Alberton, "and she has suffered quite enough, already."

"Shall I get you a coach, sir?" inquired one of the attendants on the theatre. Alberton replied in the affirmative, for he felt that he was by no means in a fit condition to walk to Piccadilly.

"Good heavens! what is to become of me, if you leave me here?" said Mrs. Wilmington, in her most plaintive tones, and stepping forward at the moment Lord Alberton was entering the coach.

"I really know not how I can be of any service to you," returned Alberton, coolly, "for I have not a farthing left in my pocket—but surely, you can get a coach, and pay your fare when you reach your home, wherever it is."

"It is easy to talk," returned Mrs. Wilmington, in a half-resentful tone; "but when I return home, there will perhaps be no one up, and the coachman will not be put off with promises—and to walk through the mud with such shoes as these," and she looked down at her delicate kid slippers.

"Will you have the goodness to tell me how I can oblige you, Mrs. Wilmington?" said Lord Alberton, "for I am really very anxious to be at home."

"You can set me down at my lodgings, my lord," she replied, evidently piqued at his extreme coolness. "It will be something out of your way, certainly, but I have known the time, when you would have thought little of any sacrifice to serve a fellow-creature in distress."

Lord Alberton hesitated a moment, but he could devise no other plan of relieving her from her present wretched plight; and drawing back from the coach door, he signed to her to take her place in it.

Stung to the quick by this mortifying proof of his utter coldness and indifference to her, which prevented his even paying her the usual compliment of offering his hand to assist her, Mrs. Wilmington jumped in, and took her seat, Lord Alberton following her.

"Will you give your directions to the coachman, madam?" he observed, throwing himself into the opposite corner.

She gave her address to some street in the New Road, and then, with a half apologizing air, turned to observe

to Lord Alberton that it was taking him a long round; adding, that it would perhaps be more agreeable to him, that she should set him down at his residence, when he could pay the coachman her fare on to the New Road.

"It will, certainly, be much more agreeable to me," said Alberton, drily. The coach was just moving, and putting his head out, he countermanded the orders she had given.

"Drive to Piccadilly, coachman," he exclaimed, and at that moment his eye rested on a round, fat, good-humoured face, which was turned up to him with a broad stare.

Alberton drew in his head, without recollecting who it was that was thus attentively surveying him; but the moment after he remembered that it was Mr. Levison's old friend Mr. Irwin; and, anxious to show him that he did not purposely neglect a passing tribute of respect, he again leaned out of the window. The rain had now ceased; and, by the bright glare of the lamps, he saw that Mr. Irwin was conducting down the steps of the theatre his sour, stately help-mate, to the carriage which, it appeared, had waited for the departure of his (Alberton's) hack to draw up. They were followed by two other ladies, closely enveloped in their cloaks; but Alberton paid little attention to this—he only saw that Mr. Irwin caught his glance, and returned it with a look of reproach, and a half shake of the head.

"He has seen my companion," thought Alberton, as he drew back again into his corner; "and, unacquainted with the circumstances, meant to reproach my inconstancy. Am I never to be freed from vexation, on this woman's account?"

assistance of a friend, to go to Ireland—and hoped I should do better without her.

"Katherine's husband, who was gone to sea, was now expected home; and she gave me to understand that it would not be convenient for me to be there. How, indeed, could I expect it—for she had but one room.

"I was now quite in despair—for I knew it would be quite impossible for me to pay rent—and keep from starving on the gains of needlework, when I accidentally met my sister Ellen, whom I had never seen since my unhappy marriage. She was beautifully dressed, and looked all gaiety and spirits—while I, with my shabby black silk, torn and darned in fifty places—my rusty velvet bonnet, and still more rusty crape veil, drawn over my pale face, looked, as she said, the very picture of misery and mortification.

"She had been, she told me, for more than a year, the companion of a gay old Irish nobleman, who had brought her to London; but had left her within a few weeks, because he was about to marry a lady, whose friends had insisted on his breaking off all his former connexions.

"He had not left her totally destitute, however, she said, and she had plenty of clothes. If I would come home with her, she would see if she could not find some in her wardrobe which would make me a little more like a human being.

"Ellen has no heart, Lord Alberton, though she is my sister!"

Lord Alberton thought that was by no means impossible—but he did not interrupt her narrative.

"I went with her—was equipped in some of her finery—and, in short, she laughed me out of all my plans of

reformation, and I consented to remain with her. I need not pursue the tale of misery and degradation any farther, Alberton—but if you knew how I hate myself and my companions—even my sister is hateful to me! She has, as yet, known no reverse—she has not experienced, as I have, the miseries——"

Lord Alberton suddenly interrupted the condemnation of her sister, which he thought was by no means necessary to enhance the merit of her own remorse and penitence——

"I leave town to-morrow, Mrs. Wilmington," he observed, "and shall therefore have no opportunity of personally assisting you; and, indeed, with my trifling knowledge of the world, or of business, it is not likely I could be of much service; but it appears to me that if, which I will not doubt, you are really anxious to maintain yourself respectably, there are many trades which a female can manage, and for which your manners and address would fit you. Now, I will be very plain with you—I can and would afford from one to two hundred pounds, for the purpose of enabling you to settle yourself in any manner you may think fit. I will, when I reach home, give you a supply, to enable you at once to leave your present disreputable home; and, as soon as you can meet with an opportunity of procuring a situation likely to answer your purpose, I will remit you the necessary sum."

For probably the first time in her life, Mrs. Wilmington was unable to express her feelings. She had calculated only on being able, by a sincere avowal of her situation, to extract from her companion some present aid; but she was now completely overpowered by the

extent of his undeserved generosity, and she could only inarticulately murmur the gratitude which her tears for once evinced was sincere.

The coach stopped at the door of his residence; and Alberton hurried to his desk, from which he took ten guineas; and having sealed it in an envelope, enclosing also the address to which she was to write, so soon as she found it necessary—he gave it to Ned (who had returned before him, and was awaiting his arrival), desiring him to convey it to the lady who was waiting in the coach, and at the same time pay the coachman his demand for conveying her to her residence.

Ned's looks expressed a world of wonder and curiosity, when he returned after performing his commission; but he soon forgot Mrs. Wilmington, and all connected with her, when he discovered, from the appearance of his master's clothes, that the latter had met with some disaster.

Lord Alberton smiled good-humouredly at his exclamations——

"Yes, Ned," he replied, "I have indeed been down in the dirt, as you say—and, what is worse, it cost me three or four pounds before I got up again."

"The Lord preserve us!" exclaimed Ned; "but this Lunnun, as my poor old master used to say, is the very devil! And so as you warned me, too, my lord, about getting into scrapes, and being imposed upon."

"It is easier to give advice, than follow our own precepts, Ned, you see," returned his master.

"There's never no good comes of nothing when that Miss Delaney has any hand in it," said Ned, shaking his head very solemnly; "for my part, I would as soon see

Old Nick himself, as her face—though it's not an ugly one, either. But, so sure as she shows herself, so sure there's some mischief a brewing! I declare I quite started, when I found it was her, in the coach at the door—for, thinks I, what a deal my master has suffered a'ready, all along of these Delaneys—and yet they stick to him like pitch, that one can never get rid of, if it once gets upon one's fingers, till it be clean worn away."

Alberton smiled at this coarse illustration—yet he could not but allow it was somewhat applicable.

"Well, I do hope, we shall have done with all the family, now," resumed Ned, who was encouraged by his master's smile to proceed, "for, the deuce is in it, if they can follow us down to Cumberland; but, I suppose, it was taking this Mrs. What's-her-name's part against somebody, that got you into this pickle, my lord?"

"You have very nearly hit it, Ned," replied his master; "it was in attempting to rescue her from the hands of a villain, that I was knocked down, and lost my purse and its contents."

"The Lord preserve us! Then, it was about you, the people was talking, when I com'd out of the playhouse!" said Ned, lifting up his hands and eyes. "I made a mistake, you see, and got into the wrong playhouse—and didn't see Tony Lumpkin at all, but a play all about a black fellow——"

"Never mind the play, Ned—for you know I saw it," interrupted Lord Alberton, "tell me what it was you heard, that related to me."

"Why, I didn't know, then, it was about you; but when I came out, there was five or six people talking together, and I heard one of 'em say that there was five or

six sovereigns in the purse, he was sure, besides silver—for it looked quite heavy at both ends; and then the one he was telling, who, I believe, was what they call an officer—though I never saw or heard of any officers beside soldier-officers before I com'd to London—he says, 'well, but why didn't the gentleman give an alarm? The fellow might have been stopped!' and so then another says, 'oh, it was very plain the gentleman didn't care much about the money—he wouldn't have minded twice as much, to get rid of the fellow. It was the lady he wanted, or else he'd never have took her off, arter all, in a coach!' And they said something about her being the man's wife; and, what I'm sure was false—and I'd have told 'em so, too, if I'd known it had been you—the said, they dare say you know'd very well you deserved all you'd got, and had been the means of '*veigling* away the woman from her husband.

"I shouldn't have stopped to have heard all this," continued Ned, "only that among them there was a lad that I know'd very well—and you know him, too, my lord—Richard, that was groom to master's friend, Mr. Irwin—he's the footman now, and I wanted to have a bit of talk with him, and a glass of beer, for old acquaintance sake—but he told me he couldn't stop, for he must follow the carriage, as his master had only left him to learn the rights of the business; and besides, Ned, says he, you'd better make haste home—for I heard your master order the coach to Piccadilly, and you'll be wanted, may be, to wait at supper.' I couldn't think, for the life of me, what he meant, or where he had seen you—but now it's all out."

Alberton heard with extreme vexation this detail from

his servant. It seemed as if there was, indeed, a fatality attending his connexion with the Delaneys; and that his most praiseworthy actions were doomed to be misrepresented, and become the source of false accusations, when connected with that family.

He knew, too well, Mrs. Irwin's inquisitive and censorious disposition, not to feel convinced that it was to gratify those propensities that the servant had been commissioned to inquire into the particulars of the affair, of which Mr. Irwin himself had probably been in part a witness; and though he could not, at that moment, foresee that it could be of any material injury to him, he was by no means contented to rest quietly under the imputations which he was convinced would be cast upon him.

The more he considered it, the more vexed he was that he had not profited by the opportunity of addressing Mr. Irwin, and at once candidly stating all that had occurred. But it was now too late to regret what could not be recalled, and he was obliged to submit with patience till an opportunity should offer of clearing the affair.

CHAPTER XXXV.

> Slander lives upon succession,
> For ever housed where once it gets possession.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

At the appointed time, the Earl of Raeburn and his son departed for Cumberland; and the latter rejoiced in the anticipation of again beholding the scenes of his happy childhood, and still more in the hope of again beholding her who had been the companion of those happy years.

Their road lay immediately past the gates of Levison Hall, and Earl Raeburn entered with the deepest interest into Alberton's feelings, as he gazed on the entrance which he had last passed through under such different feelings and circumstances.

Earl Raeburn thought of her who had once been acknowledged the mistress of the delightful domain, over which his eyes now wandered, and sighed to think how dearly she had purchased the temporary dignity; and that melancholy sigh, that thoughtful look, soon recalled Lord Alberton from dreams of the happy future, to the recollection of the melancholy past.

The estate which Earl Raeburn had purchased, was delightfully situated, but its greatest charm, in Alberton's eyes, was, that from some of the windows of the house were distinctly seen the heavy turreted chimneys of

Levison Hall, and the group of dark oaks in which that mansion was embosomed.

The anxiety which he felt to hear some particulars of the family who were now residing there, was soon relieved; for, on the very morning after his arrival, the late Mr. Levison's old coachman, who had been in the family for nearly forty years, sent up a request to be admitted to speak with Lord Alberton, which was instantly granted him.

Alberton was struck with the alteration so visible in the old man—his fat and rosy cheeks were now faded and fallen in, and the look of jocund hilarity, which his countenance had worn, was changed for the solicitude of care and anxiety.

"My old friend," exclaimed Alberton, viewing him with surprise, "what can have been the matter with you? have you been ill?"

"No, sir—my lord, I mean—I beg your pardon—I havn't been ill; that is to say, bodily ill—because I never in my life knew what illness nor care for myself was, thank God, till now—and that it is that makes it harder to bear, I suppose—for it's so unexpected, at my time of life, to be forced to look out for a fresh sarvice; and this it is, my lord, that's brought me here. I don't want to rise upon the fall of nobody, nor to put nobody out of their places, but I heard last night that your coachman was only hired as town coachman, and didn't intend stopping here more than two or three weeks, and so I thought I'd make bold, sir, to speak in time, because I should rather serve you than anybody else, my lord, seeing it would be still keeping in the family; and, besides, then," (and the old man's voice seemed to swell with

income?" were questions which he in vain tried to solve.

Old Hampton suddenly paused in the midst of a long string of additional grievances, of which he was relieving his burthened mind, for he discovered, by Lord Alberton's abstracted look and manner, that he was paying no attention to him.

"I hope it's no offence, my lord, what I've been saying," he observed, "but it seems so natural to tell you my troubles—for many a time before now you've not only listened to me, but helped me out of them—though, for my own part, I never had no troubles, that I could call downright my own, till now—and that makes it, as I said before, harder to bear; and, if I'd been fond of changing, or had done anything to lose my character, or——"

"And where are you living now, Hampton?" suddenly demanded Lord Alberton, recollecting what had been the purport of the old man's application.

"I am with my daughter-in-law, my lord; she has got a little shop in the village, and is doing pretty well—but, Lord bless me, I little thought I should ever be a burthen to her—not that I have been, yet—but, if I should not get a place soon—and at my time of life——"

"It is quite time that you should be relieved of all care, my good friend," said Alberton; "and such, I am sure, would have been Mr. Levison's feelings, and such his act, had he not been so unfortunately cut off, without——"

"Ah, that is what I have said a hundred times, my lord—not about myself only—but poor Miss Fanny! How different it would all have been, if my poor master

had but lived a few hours longer—and what bad hearts they must have, that could take such a base advantage, to rob the orphan. I'm told that poor Miss Fanny did'nt have a single thing to take away with her, except her mother's picture—but, I beg your pardon, my lord, for interrupting you—only, when I think of her, and how she has been treated, my troubles seem as nothing!"

This last observation did not tend to decrease Lord Alberton's good opinion and favourable intention towards the honest old servant; and Hampton, before he quitted him, received a substantial proof that his lordship would, as he promised, make arrangements to provide for all the servants of the late Mr. Levison, exactly as he believed it to have been the intention of his lamented friend to do.

"Heaven bless you, my lord!" said the old man. "We have all been looking for your coming down, with great anxiety—but not so much on our own accounts, as Miss Fanny's—for we did hope——"

The old man paused, as if conscious he was expressing, rather too freely, the hopes which had daily and hourly been the subject of discussion between himself and those who regarded, like him, the daughter of their old master with the most fervent affection.

Lord Alberton turned away his glowing face, at this allusion.

"It has not been my fault, my good old friend, that your hopes have not been realised," he observed.

"Ah, I knew it," said the old man, in a tone of exultation. "I was sure that you would never alter, though she hasn't got a fortune now, and you have. Ah, I shall live to see her yet hold up her head above all of them! I

know I shall! and it was because I used to say so, in the servants' hall, and it came to Mrs. Charles Levison's ears, through her fine new lady's-maid, that they hated me so, and made my life so miserable, that I've wished myself in the grave with my poor master, twenty times a day, before I could get courage to leave the old Hall, that's been my home for forty years—for I've been there ever since I was seventeen, my lord; and you may think it was a trial to leave it—but I didn't leave the horses behind, that was one good thing—for if they'd been there, I don't think I could have had the heart to leave; but, poor things, they were not good enough for Mrs. Charles, and so the new coachman, the *head* coachman, was ordered to sell them, and new ones were bought. I could have cried only for shame, when I saw them led out of the stables—but they've got into good hands; for the Rector, hearing they were to be sold, sent and bought them, out of respect, as he said, to his departed friend. It would have been only respectful, I think, if Mrs. Charles had kept them—but they were too old—she hates every thing that's old, as if she wasn't growing older and older herself, every day of her life!"

Lord Alberton could not but smile at the old man's bitterness, even while he sincerely sympathised with him in his regret, at the total subversion of the old establishment at the Hall, and the coachman departed quite satisfied that, though it might not be in the young lord's power to restore all that he lamented the loss of, the time was not far distant which would restore the daughter of his respected master, with increased splendour, to those who so bitterly lamented the eclipse of her fortunes.

The surprise and disappointment which Alberton had felt, at ascertaining that Fanny had, indeed, totally quitted Cumberland, was succeeded by still more disquieting sensations—for in the course of his conjectures as to what could have induced aunt Rachel to return to London, which he knew she disliked as a residence, the recollection of her intimacy with Mrs. Irwin, and that Mr. Irwin had been, by the will which had been so fatally destroyed, appointed one of Mr. Levison's executors, suddenly darted across his mind, and with it came the vision of the two ladies, so closely muffled up in cloaks, whom he had beheld with the former and his austere spouse, on the steps of Drury Lane Theatre.

"It was Fanny and her aunt! Oh, he could not for a moment doubt it—and he had been so blind, so stupid, so thoughtless, as not to bestow a second glance on them—and they had seen him, too, entering the hackney coach with that unhappy woman! They had heard, perhaps, a tale highly exaggerated and tortured, to suit that love of scandal, which was so prominent a characteristic of Mrs. Irwin. He had never been a favourite of hers,—and Fanny would listen and perhaps believe implicitly that which appearances certainly corroborated!—What must she think of him, if she recognised his companion; and, even if she did not, she would perhaps believe that he had forgotten her, or that he was unworthy of her remembrance?"

Such were a few of the rapid exclamations which escaped him, when the discovery suddenly broke upon him. He was, however, soon recalled to something like calmness, by the entrance of his father, to whom he immediately related the surprise he had felt at discovering

that Fanny was in London, and his conjecture as to her being with Mr. Irwin, and expressed, in very strong terms, his regret at having so inopportunely quitted the metropolis.

"It is, indeed, unfortunate," said the Earl; "but we shall learn more, no doubt, when you have paid your intended visit to Mrs. Charles Levison."

Alberton had almost forgotten his projected excursion to the Hall, which he had, on the preceding evening, mentioned to his father, to whom he now expressed his fears that it would afford him little pleasure, from the account he had received from old Hampton.

"I shall go, nevertheless," he observed, "if it is only that I may have an opportunity of rebuking Emma, for her ingratitude; and, she may depend upon it, I shall not spare her."

The alteration which the old coachman had predicted Lord Alberton would discover, before he had been five minutes a visitor at the Hall, began to display itself to the eyes of the former, before he had even crossed the threshold—for the gate of the grounds was opened by a stranger, instead of the grey-headed domestic who had been the inhabitant of the Gothic lodge.

"What has become of Adam Gray?" demanded Lord Alberton, of the man, whose spruce appearance and easy assurance formed a striking contrast, in the eye of his lordship, to that of the person for whom he inquired.

"Adam Gray, sir? Oh, you mean the old man that used to be here? I really can't tell you, sir—that is, not exactly—but he's somewhere hereabouts; but they can tell you at the house, I dare say, if you are going there."

Alberton rode slowly onwards, but his eye involuntarily glanced into the porch of the lodge, where he had always been used to meet the smiling curtsey of the old porter's wife, and which he had so often rewarded by going into her clean little miniature of a room, praising her flowers, or tasting her gooseberry wine, and leaving a tribute to its goodness in the shape of a bright half-crown at the bottom of the glass, or among the leaves of her beautiful nosegays. In her place now stood a smart, bold, good-looking young woman, who returned his inquiring glance with one equally scrutinising, and then hastily coming forward, with a half-bow, half-curtsey, exclaimed——

"Lord bless me, sir, I beg your pardon—I really didn't know you—but I hope you'll excuse me and my husband—he's quite a stranger in these parts."

"And who are you, my good woman?" said Lord Alberton. "I do not recollect having ever——"

"Laws, sir, don't you recollect me, when you and Mr. Charles and Miss Fanny used to come over to *Missusses*, to see Miss Emma, before she was married?"

"Oh, you were one of Mrs. Lazenby's servants!" rejoined Alberton, and rode on with a feeling of vexation which he could not conquer at this first specimen.

"He didn't use to be so short and snappish, nor so stingy, either!—Many's the shilling I've had of his money," said the woman, looking after him, "but he's a lord, they say, now—and I suppose he thinks it's beneath him to take notice of them that's known him when he didn't know who he was himself."

Could Alberton have heard these remarks, it would, perhaps, have reconciled him to his conscience, which

now somewhat reproached him for the ungracious manner in which he had treated the woman, who certainly, as he now reflected, was not to blame.

Mrs. Charles Levison was not visible—but, having heard that Lord Alberton had arrived at his residence, she had anticipated his visit, and given orders for his admission.

He was therefore ushered into the drawing-room, with an assurance from the servant that his lady would be down in a few minutes; and not at all sorry did he feel, that he was allowed a short time to recover himself from the agitating remembrances which were connected with this spot.

It was not the room which, in Mr. Levison's time, had been usually appointed to the purpose of receiving company, but the identical room which had been so mysteriously neglected and disused, and the history of which had so thrilled Lord Alberton's heart with horror, when at length it had been revealed to him.

It was, in fact, the very room in which his unfortunate mother had witnessed the murder, or at least had beheld the dying pangs of the murdered Alfred Levison.

It had been recently fitted up with the most profuse elegance and splendour—but it was all lost upon Lord Alberton—he thought only of the dying agonies which it had beheld—the fierce demoniac passions of the murderer—the contending horror and affright of her who had been in part the cause of the crime—or, at least, had been made the instrument. The windows opening to the terrace were unclosed, and a profusion of the choicest flowers breathed their fragrance there—but Alberton saw only the pale horror-struck image of his mother, as she

had described herself, entering by one of these windows, determined to avow her guilty concealment of her former marriage, and finding that it was too late.

From the appalling recollections which forced themselves upon his mind, he was roused by the entrance of Mrs. Charles Levison, clothed in all the studied paraphernalia of woe—but bearing in her face, her voice, and her step, the strongest proofs that, beyond her outward appearance, there was no trace of sorrow for the events which had placed her in the situation she now held.

"I have won my wager of mamma!" she exclaimed, after the first salutation. "I knew you would be here this morning—but she insisted upon it that you would wait till Rosa came down, and——but now, do tell me, Alberton, is it true that, after all, you are to marry Rosa Somerville?"

"Can you ask me such a question, Emma?" said Lord Alberton, in a tone of reproach. "Do you, then, think so meanly of me, as to suppose my feelings have wavered with circumstances? Do you not rather suppose that the unjust reverse of fortune which has befallen Fanny Levison, has rendered her, if possible——"

"Oh, I am sure I never said or thought anything of the kind," interrupted Emma; "but, for goodness' sake, don't look so very enthusiastic about it. As to Rosa, I only asked you, because I saw a paragraph in one of the London papers that I thought related to you and her—but I suppose I was mistaken, though it certainly corresponded, in all respects."

Lord Alberton made no reply—for he was so fully aware of the disposition of his companion, that he had very little doubt this was solely an invention of the

moment, to account to him for her *mal à propos* question.

"Well, how do you like my taste?" she exclaimed, observing that his eyes wandered over the room. "Is it not prettily fitted up, considering? People are all wondering how I could have the courage to have this room opened once more," she continued, looking round her with evident self-approbation, "but I saw no use of losing the handsomest room in the house, because——"

"Pray let us speak of something else," interrupted Lord Alberton, gravely.

"Oh, dear, I beg your pardon—what a thoughtless creature I am," she replied; "and, by the by, that reminds me of another thing—have you seen or heard anything of Fanny?"

"I have heard quite sufficient to grieve and surprise me—for I have just learned that she is in London; and I am exceedingly sorry that I was not made acquainted with it, until I had left the metropolis," returned Alberton.

"Oh, she is really grown so strange and unaccountable, that I am not surprised at anything!" returned Mrs. Levison.

"What could have been aunt Rachel's reason for going thither, now, when every body is quitting it?" inquired Alberton, without noticing her last remark.

"Oh, I don't know, I am sure," replied his companion; "but I believe it was to have the advice of Mr. Irwin, who, in her opinion, is a miracle of wisdom and knowledge."

"Then I was right," said Alberton, hastily. "I did see her! Good heavens, how unfortunate!"

Mrs. Levison looked at him for an explanation—and, without entering into any particulars, he explained that he had had a glimpse only of Fanny, with her aunt and Mr. and Mrs. Irwin; but, unaware of her being in London, he had not at the moment recognised her.

The confirmation he had now received, had the effect of completely detaching his thoughts from every other subject, and Mrs. Levison uttered a long string of inquiries and observations, to which he replied sometimes correctly, and at other times so completely at random, that she burst into a loud fit of laughter.

The sound seemed at once to startle him from his reverie—but even her raillery could not bring a smile to his lips, and she at length remarked, with considerable pique in her manner——

"Well, really, it is very flattering to find that the pleasure of this meeting is all on my side—for it is very evident that you feel none! I have been counting every day till you came, and teasing every body that had anything to do at your house, to know when you actually would make your appearance, and all the gratitude you feel——"

"I am very grateful for your good opinion of me," interrupted Lord Alberton, "but I have much to render me serious, Emma, in this my first visit to the house in which I passed so many happy years."

"Well, I know all that,—but what is the use of dwelling upon what is all past and gone? I am sure I have enough to make me melancholy," (and she forced a sigh) "if I was to sit down and grieve for the past—but, as mamma says, what would be the use of weeping away my youth, it could not recal——"

Lord Alberton interrupted her exposition of her mamma's philosophy and her own, by asking after her infant —"the future representative of the house of Levison," as poor Mr. Levison had so pompously styled it.

"Oh, dear, that reminds me that I haven't seen the poor little fellow to-day," she replied. "Do touch the bell, Alberton, and I will send for him."

Lord Alberton complied with her direction, and an order was given to bring Master Charles directly.

Nearly a quarter of an hour elapsed, and more than once the impatient summons had been repeated—and then a poor little sickly infant made its appearance in the arms of its nurse, who began a confused apology for being so long—Master Charles having been asleep.

"He is asleep now, I think," observed the thoughtless mother, taking the child in her arms, and looking attentively at it for a moment or two, seemingly aroused to a suspicion that something was amiss.

Lord Alberton looked at the child with interest and pity—for, though he could see nothing of the resemblance which the mother suggested between it and its unhappy father, he could not but recal, even on hearing its name repeated, a thousand circumstances connected with the friend and companion of his own childhood.

"Take him to the nursery, Watson," said Mrs. Levison, in a few minutes, "and let him have his sleep out."

The child was taken away, and without seeming to bestow another thought upon its very evident indisposition, the gay mother began questioning Lord Alberton as to his intended style of living.

"Do you mean," she exclaimed, "indeed, I hope you

do mean to be very gay, and give parties, balls, &c. If you do not, I shall not like you at all for a neighbour, for I am half dead with *ennui*, and long for the summer to be over, or at least for the London season to commence. Oh, but I must tell you that I have got charming neighbours," she continued, "at Stanmore House. You will see them, of course—for they visit and are visited by every body. Madame St. George, indeed, is not altogether to my taste—she is too grave and too *penseroso;* but her husband is a most delightful companion—plays, sings, draws, dances, *improvisatores*, every thing, *à merveille*. He is always in spirits, too—never any of your grand, sentimental—in short, he is just the man to my taste, and all the ladies, for twenty miles round, think the same of him."

"Indeed! and what do their husbands and his wife think of that?" demanded Alberton, half seriously.

"Oh, you scandalous creature, how can you ask such a shocking question," she replied; "but, indeed, I don't think St. George troubles himself much about that. *Vive la bagatelle* is his motto, and he never gives himself any concern about what people think of him—by the by, though, I believe he is rather ungrateful towards his lady—for it is whispered that he had not a fortune, and she had."

"St. George!" repeated Lord Alberton, "St. George! describe him, Emma—what sort of a person is he?"

"Dear me, how could I have been so thoughtless—I forgot that he knows you, has seen you in France—and poor Charles, too, he knew him."

"Then it is the same," said Lord Alberton, in surprise, "and he is married, you say?"

"Yes, married a widow of fortune; and now I'll tell you the truth—I believe he almost wishes he had hung himself first—but this is between ourselves. Oh, she is such a disagreeable, satirical, ill-tempered—but then she gives such gay parties, and manages every thing in such style, every body doats upon her——"

"But you and her husband," said Lord Alberton, drily.

"Well, I declare, Lord Alberton, you seem to have been taking a leaf out of her book, for that was said just in her style; but, however, I don't mind you a bit; you know, I always used to call you Mentor, though Fanny would insist you were more like her favorite hero, Telemachus."

The sudden mention of Fanny, and this allusion to their childish days, at once drove every other thought from Lord Alberton's mind; and Mrs. Levison took care to pursue the advantage she had gained, by continuing to speak of Fanny in terms so kind and affectionate, that he forgot his resentment, and indeed began to believe it quite impossible that it could have been any unkindness on the part of Emma, that had occasioned the sudden departure of the former.

They were still speaking of her, when Mrs. Lazenby entered the room, and the sight of her instantly recalled to his mind the different reasons he had for disliking her.

Mrs. Lazenby's feelings towards him, however, appeared quite of a contrary nature—for the pleasure she expressed at seeing him, and the congratulations she poured forth upon his attaining his proper rank and fortune, were quite overpowering, and considerably hastened his departure.

R. Westall R.A. Del.

JEANNETTE.

London: Tallis & Co. 2, Northampton Square.

He was riding slowly along, gazing with fond recollection at different objects which reminded him of past times, when his attention was attracted by a beautiful girl, who, though clad in the very humblest dress of a cottage child, had something so striking and superior in her look, that he involuntarily turned again to gaze upon her. She was sitting at the foot of a stile, as if to rest, while the earthen jug that stood by her side, indicated that she had been to fetch water from the brook which he had just passed. Her large dark eyes rested on his with a look of curiosity, but without that embarrassment which is usual in English girls, of the class to which she evidently belonged; and Lord Alberton, forcibly struck with the *toute ensemble* of her appearance, almost involuntarily checked his horse, and demanded her name.

"My name is Jeannette, sir," she replied, her clear olive cheeks crimsoning, though her manner was totally free from aukwardness or bashfulness.

Alberton was still more surprised and interested, for the girl's accent, as well as the name she had pronounced, was decidedly foreign—and, looking still more earnestly at her, he observed——

"You do not belong to this neighbourhood, my dear —whose daughter are you?"

The girl shook her head, and cast down her eyes; and Lord Alberton, doubtful whether she comprehended his question, repeated it in French.

Jeannette's bright eyes glistened with pleasure as she looked up in his face——

"Ah, you understand my language," she exclaimed; "I am so glad to hear it—there is no one here who can talk to me, but Mr. St. George, and he so seldom comes

—and that bad, cross Duclos, who never speaks but to grumble and swear."

"And who is Duclos? and where do you live? at Mr. St. George's?" said Lord Alberton.

"Oh, no," she replied, in a melancholy tone. "We live in the little cottage yonder," and she pointed to one which was just visible through the trees. "But do not tell any one—for Mr. St. George will be angry, and Louison says she will go away, as soon as she is well —for she does not like to vex him, though he is so cruel!"

The last observation explained the mystery.

"Louison," said Alberton, "is——"

"My sister, sir. We are orphans—but we were so happy, till we met——but I must not say anything about him, for she will be angry—she loves him still, though he has made her shed so many tears; and now he wants to send her away, and that cross Duclos says we must go —for if Madame St. George finds out that we are here, she will be mad."

"And have you no friends in England?" said Lord Alberton, who felt his interest every moment increasing for the innocent Jeannette.

"Alas, no," she replied, "and Louison is so ill—and she frets so—for, if she were to die, what would become of Jeannette. We were so happy, when first we came to England—for Louison got plenty of work from the ladies, and I used to help her, and make her fire, and clean the chamber, and——but, then *he* came, and it was soon all over! Louison used to cry so, that she could not work; and sometimes the flowers were spoiled, and she could not sell them; and then she got worse and

worse, for she could not find out what had become of him, and when, at last, she did find out that he was here, she could not rest till she came to this place. So we left London, and we have been here ever since—though Duclos growls and scolds whenever he brings Louison any money—and it is very little, too—but if she was well, and able to work, and could go back to London, she would not take any at all; and often and often I have heard her tell Duclos, that she would sooner starve than accept a favour from any one, but for her poor Jeannette."

Tears trickled down the cheek of the innocent girl, as she uttered the last sentence; and Lord Alberton's gentle tone and manner, as he attempted to soothe her, seemed but to increase her sorrow.

"But, tell me, Jeannette," he observed, "who is this Duclos, of whom you speak?"

"Ah, he is the friend of Monsieur St. George," she replied; "and he it was to whom my poor father on his death-bed entrusted his children, and the little money he had to leave for their support! Well, that has been all spent, long ago!"

"And Duclos—was he the person who introduced St. George to Louison?" said Lord Alberton.

"Oh, to be sure—yes, he was his friend," said Jeannette, after a moment's reflection, as if not exactly comprehending at first the question, "but it is a long while ago since Louison first saw him," she continued, "and I was so little, I do not remember it—only I know he was good and kind then, and used to call me his little sister! But, oh, it is different now—for he is rich, and Louison and Jeannette are poor; and he has married a lady,

instead of Louison, so I am no longer his sister! But do not tell Louison, if you should see her—for she will be angry—she does not like me to think that he is no longer good and kind."

"And she is very ill, you say, Jeannette. And who attends her?" said Lord Alberton.

"Oh, no one but me," she replied, "and, oh dear, I must go now—for she will think I am long gone."

She raised the pitcher on her head, and dropping a smiling curtsey to Lord Alberton, was turning away, when he called her back.

"We must not part so, Jeannette," he observed, "I must give you something to remember me. There," he continued, putting a couple of guineas into her hand, "only remember that I request, as a favour, that you will say nothing to Mr. St. George, or his friend Duclos, of your having seen a stranger."

"Oh, no, that I will not, if it is your wish, Monsieur," returned Jeannette, "nor Louison either, if I tell her how kind you were. But will you not tell me your name, for Louison will want to know——"

"I will see you again some day," he observed, "when I am riding this way." And, without waiting her reply, he rode off, leaving Jeannette gazing upon the two pieces of gold, of which she scarcely comprehended the real value.

"And this is the gay, delightful Mr. St. George, whose praises Emma sounded with so much emphasis?" he thought to himself. "The life and soul of all our society," were her words. "And, were I to repeat what I have heard—were I even to point out to her where the victim of his cruel arts lingers out her mournful existence,

in poverty and sickness—it would not render him, I dare say, less acceptable to her. Oh, no, the seducer is received with smiles—it is his wretched victim only that is frowned upon, and left to solitude and despair!"

The earl was waiting, with considerable impatience, the result of his visit; and he betrayed much more disappointment than Alberton had expected, at hearing that Fanny was really in London, and that thus the union between her and his son, which he now looked forward to with as much interest as he had formerly anticipated his own, was likely to be still farther protracted.

"You will write to her, of course, without delay?" he observed; "it can be no longer necessary that etiquette and ceremony should intervene between you, and prevent your happiness."

Alberton replied in the affirmative, and the very next post carried, not only a long and affectionate letter from him, in which he conjured Fanny to confirm his happiness, by becoming at once his wife; but also a more formal one from the Earl to Miss Rachel, entreating her to use her influence with her niece, to consent, at once, to accept the hand of his son; and declaring his readiness to enter into any arrangements that the former might think proper, for his future daughter-in-law.

Though feeling conscious that he could have no reasonable cause to fear any opposition to his wishes, Lord Alberton had been so long inured to disappointment, that he could by no means bring himself to look upon the affair (as Lord Raeburn did) as definitively settled; and most heavily and tediously did the hours lag on, which necessarily elapsed before the expected reply could reach them.

At length it came.

"Here is a whole budget of letters from London!" said the Earl, who entered the breakfast-room at the same moment as his son.

Lord Alberton, however, saw none but that which bore Fanny's well-known hand-writing, and instantly selecting it, he retreated to the recess of the bow-window to open it, where his emotions could not be observed.

The Earl had, in the mean time, seated himself at the breakfast-table to peruse, at his leisure, Miss Rachel's reply to him.

"What can be the meaning of all this?" he suddenly exclaimed. "What crotchets have got into the old lady's head? Tell me, Alberton—Fanny has written to you, what does she say? for I can scarcely believe my senses! Her aunt writes to say——"

"That she rejects my offer, sir! is it not to that purport?" said Alberton, with assumed coolness.

"It certainly appears so," returned the Earl, "and she refers me to you for an explanation why she does so; convinced, she says, that, if you choose to be candid with me, I shall agree with her in thinking that such an union will be little likely to secure the happiness of the beloved being——but read her letter—or tell me, first, does Fanny write in the same strain? And, if you can, explain what can have induced them to act so differently to what we expected, for I am sure you could not have foreseen, any more than myself, this termination of our hopes."

"I certainly did foresee that it was just possible that appearances might require some explanation," returned Lord Alberton, "but, I confess, I was unprepared for such unequivocal condemnation as it seems I have

incurred. There is one consolation, however," he continued, smiling, "that Fanny, in defiance of the prudent counsels of her friends, declares herself on my side. She will distrust, she says, even the evidence of her own senses, until I acknowledge myself guilty; and though she adjures me, rather too solemnly, to explain, with perfect candour, the circumstances alluded to, to convince me that she is quite free from all suspicion—still I have not the slightest fear that my confession will satisfy her, and in so doing remove, as she says, every obstacle to our mutual happiness."

"Bravo! she is the same open-hearted, generous girl I have ever thought her!" exclaimed Earl Raeburn, "but, now do explain, for I am on the tenter-hooks of curiosity—what could have given rise to all these demurs and delays?"

Lord Alberton explained the whole affair, from his first rencontre with Mrs. Wilmington and her sister, in the box of the theatre, to the *fracas* of which he was a witness between the former and her husband; and his (Alberton's) subsequent interference, with its consequences. All this, as he foresaw, had been most industriously misrepresented by his old enemy, Mrs. Irwin, who had never forgotten or forgiven his spirited rebuff to her, in their first interview, in defence of Fanny—but there was another, and a still more potent cause why Mrs. Irwin so sedulously arrayed herself against Lord Alberton; and though Fanny, in her letter to the latter, but slightly hinted at that which had influenced her aunt's decided negative of his proposal, she had said quite enough to rouse his jealousy up in arms, and render him doubly impatient to vindicate himself from the false accusations

which his appearance in the coach with Mrs. Wilmington had so opportunely confirmed, at least to Mrs. Irwin's satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate.

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now retrace our steps to the period when Fanny, by the death of her father, and the mortifying discovery that she had no legitimate claim to the title of his daughter, and consequently, no claim at all to the fortune he had certainly intended for her, found herself left entirely dependant on the kindness and affection of her aunt, who too, she now learned, was, by her recent loss, reduced from the greatest affluence, to comparative poverty.

It was not for a considerable period, indeed, that Fanny could be brought to contemplate her situation with regret. The loss of her father had deadened her heart to all other afflictions; she cared nothing for wealth or distinction; and though she suffered the most acute agony at the discovery of her birth, it was not because she felt that any stigma attached to herself, but she mourned that her father should ever have deviated from those strict principles of honour which had governed his every action,

in the latter part of his life. And she mourned, too, bitterly mourned, for the sorrows of her mother, whom he had so often spoken of, as the model of all that was lovely, and pure, and innocent.

Time, however, that great ameliorator of all sorrows, began to soften the acuteness of her regret for the only parent she had ever known; but to those pure and natural feelings soon succeeded causes for grief much more bitter, and more likely to be lasting.

She was not herself the first to discover that she was no longer treated with deference by Mrs. Lazenby, or with quite the usual kindness and confidence by Mrs. Charles Levison; but when once her eyes were opened to the fact by her aunt's tearful remarks, she became instantly anxious to quit for ever the residence in which, as poor Miss Rachel observed, they were evidently considered intruders.

The first announcement of their intention, however, was received with well-feigned surprise, and well-sustained opposition on the part of Mrs. Lazenby and her daughter.

"It would have such a strange appearance," the former observed, "and the world would be ill-natured enough, perhaps, to put a wrong construction on their departure, and say that they (herself and Mrs. Charles Levison) had acted unkindly by them, and made their residence irksome, and that she was sure was quite contrary to the truth; for it was both Emma's wish and hers, that they should consider Levison Hall as much at their disposal as it had ever been. She hoped that Fanny did not think the proposal to convert her bed-room and dressing-room into a nursery, as being more airy than

the one hitherto appropriated for that purpose, was intended——"

"Pray, madam, spare yourself this trouble," interrupted Fanny, somewhat abruptly, "do not suppose that I arrogate to myself the right of being offended, or indeed of having any feelings at all on the subject."

Mrs. Lazenby was silenced, "Somebody must have repeated to her the very words I used, when speaking of her," she thought to herself, and feeling, though somewhat abashed, that all farther hypocrisy was needless, she waived any reply to one who she was conscious had but too much cause for the resentment which her answer betrayed.

To Emma's ready tears, Fanny was equally impenetrable. She did not, indeed, believe that the regret the latter expressed was altogether feigned; for she did not consider that Emma was either hypocritical, or naturally bad-hearted; but she had, for some weeks, seen that the still gay, thoughtless widow, far from having been sobered by the late melancholy events, was longing anxiously to enjoy her unrestrained freedom, and the splendid resources which would now enable her to indulge her love of show, extravagance, and dissipation.

To all this, the presence of Fanny and her aunt was of course a check—she could not throw off entirely the appearance of sorrow and mourning, while their tears were still flowing, and their mournful looks respondent to their sable habits.

Had she been left entirely to herself, indeed, Mrs. Charles Levison would probably have both felt and acted with much more real kindness and sincerity towards

W. Dorrant Sc.

Mrs. Charles Levison

London, Tallis & Co. April 7th 1854

Fanny, for whom she felt as much affection as it was possible a mind so volatile and unreflecting as hers could feel; but her mother's influence counteracted all that her natural kindness of disposition would have suggested—and led her to look upon both Fanny and her aunt as incumbrances; and, what was still more conclusive in closing her heart towards them, as being disposed to view her with no friendly feelings, for having intruded between them and the wealth they had expected to enjoy.

Though she shed, therefore, "some natural tears," when Miss Rachel announced her intended departure, they were soon dried by her mother's adroit insinuations, and the prospects of gaiety and enjoyment which lay before her, unchequered by their reproof, and unclouded by their melancholy.

Mrs. Lazenby, however, indulged much deeper views in her wish to get rid of Fanny Levison, than she at once disclosed to her daughter. She knew that it was highly probable that Lord Alberton would, in a short period, revisit the place of his birth, and most probably take possession of the beautiful estate which she understood the Earl had relinquished to him. Emma was still beautiful in her mother's eyes; indeed, she was handsomer than she had been, even in her girlish days. She was now rich, too, and at her (Mrs. Lazenby's) decease, would be still richer. The estates (Lord Alberton's, and Levison Hall) joined, and, indeed, she did not see, taking all things together, how Lord Alberton could make a better or more proper choice than to marry the blooming widow of his friend. He had ever shown the warmest interest, the kindest attention, to Emma; and had he possessed a suitable fortune when she first knew him, as the *protegé*

of Mr. Levison, he would have been the very person she should have chosen for a son-in-law; and how much greater now were his recommendations to her favour, when, in addition to a princely fortune, it was in his power to confer on her daughter the title, eventually, of a countess.

To all these day-dreams, there was but one serious obstacle—Alberton's known ardent attachment to Fanny; but she trusted that, even if Alberton should be so foolishly romantic as to be willing to overlook the disparagement of her birth, and the loss of her fortune, the Earl of Raeburn, who had seen so much more of the world, would think differently; in short, Mrs. Lazenby, like most people whose minds are ardently fixed on one object, thought light of all that opposed it. Could she get rid of Fanny before Alberton came down, the rest would be easy of attainment.

These hopes appeared all on the point of realisation, when the intended departure of the aunt and niece was announced; but they received again a sudden check, when aunt Rachel, with conscious pride and pleasure, put into Mrs. Charles Levison's hands the letter in which Earl Raeburn, with every expression of respect and commiseration, entreated them to take possession of his mansion, and consider it as their own; adding a hint, which was very easily interpreted, that at no distant period he hoped it would be more than in name their own.

"Well, and you will accept the offer, surely, madam?" said Emma, who had read the letter aloud, without at all comprehending the feelings it excited in her mother's bosom.

"Certainly not," said Fanny, decidedly, "but I beg

my dear aunt's pardon for anticipating her, though I am sure I know——" and she looked her aunt earnestly in the face.

"Yes, you are quite right, my dear—I shall decline this offer, though I feel its full value. Not that I ever suspected Earl Raeburn to be one of those summer friends who would fly off at the first indication of a frost. As to Alberton, I would answer for his heart as I would for my own—he would be the last to be swayed by mercenary considerations. Nevertheless, I shall, for the present," (and she laid a strong emphasis on the last words,) "decline taking possession of his house."

"Well, I am better reconciled to parting with you, now," said Mrs. Charles Levison, addressing Fanny; "for I see plainly that, at no distant period, you will be my neighbour."

Fanny smiled. It was evident that the thought was not displeasing to her—but the smile was speedily transformed to a sigh, by a remark from Mrs. Lazenby.

"Well," she observed, "I should certainly not have been surprised at such an offer from Lord Alberton, because I know he has always been wonderfully romantic—but I confess that from Earl Raeburn—a man of the world, and one who can fully value the advantages of birth and fortune—and yet, after all, perhaps, it is not to be wondered at—for a man who was so weak as to fall violently in love at his age, cannot be a very wise man; and it may be, perhaps, that he has not quite dismissed the tender feeling, even yet, though he cannot, with any propriety——Dear me, I hope I have said nothing offensive! Fanny, I see, has left the room in a pet."

"It cannot be supposed that the subject you have chosen is particularly pleasing, madam," said Miss Rachel, "but we will dismiss it, for it recals recollections, even to me, that I would wish buried in oblivion."

Within a few days from this conversation, and while Fanny and her aunt were still undetermined whither to bend their course, and more than half inclined to put in practice a plan they had often talked of, of making a complete tour of England and Wales, which would be more likely, as Miss Rachel observed, to restore their spirits, than sitting down at once, quietly, in a strange home—the latter received a most pressing invitation from her old friend, Mrs. Irwin, to join her and her husband in London; from which place they intended, after a few weeks' residence, to proceed to Swansea, where a house and other property had been lately bequeathed to Mr. Irwin. As an additional motive for accepting this invitation, Mrs. Irwin wrote, that there were reasons to believe that the affairs of the banking-house, the failure of which had been so detrimental to Miss Rachel's interests, were likely to prove much more favourable than had been expected; and that it would certainly be desirable that she should be on the spot, till they were finally arranged.

To London, therefore, Rachel and her niece departed —for Fanny, though she certainly contemplated, with no very delightful anticipation, a residence with Mrs. Irwin, whose austere manners and narrow and illiberal mind had impressed her with no very pleasant recollections, was still too attentive to her aunt's interest and feelings to offer any objection.

Contrary to her expectations, Mrs. Irwin's reception

of her was far more kind and considerate than when she had beheld her in a more elevated station; and Fanny felt proportionately grateful, for she had, from the first, made up her mind that, if it was possible that the change in her situation had effected so great an alteration even in the estimation of one whom she had loved and treated with the affection of a sister, as in the case of Emma, she could have little reason to hope that it would not much more influence the mind of Mrs. Irwin.

The hopes which the latter had held out respecting Miss Levison's money, were amply realised, and she soon found that her loss would be eventually trifling.

"It is not for my own sake that I rejoice so much," observed the old lady, "but because Fanny, come what may, will now be above the frowns of the world."

"Yes, she will have a very pretty fortune," returned Mrs. Irwin, to whom this was addressed; "and now, my dear old friend, I have a proposal to make, to which, I trust, you will give your most serious consideration. I know that Fanny and you entertain ideas that Lord Alberton will renew his proposals—now, I will tell you plainly, I do not think he will; but that is not what I was about to speak of—you cannot be blind to the fact, that Mr. Irwin's nephew, Edmund, is desperately in love with Fanny."

"Why, I will not pretend to say that I have not seen it; and, indeed, I know that Fanny has felt considerably annoyed by his persevering attentions, though she has said nothing."

"I am sorry they should *annoy* her," replied Mrs. Irwin; "for, the fact is, both Mr. Irwin and myself have felt very much rejoiced at his attention—for Edmund has,

as you know, given his uncle and me much trouble by his wild conduct—but he is now beginning to see his error, and is anxious to settle in the world, steadily and happily. It is in Fanny's power, I am sure, to make an excellent husband of him—for, with her superior good sense and management, she could do anything she pleased with him. Of his prospects I need not speak—for you know, Rachel, he is sole heir to all Mr. Irwin's property, but as to his own, I believe, candidly, he has contrived pretty well to dissipate it."

"But, my dear friend," interrupted Miss Rachel, somewhat impatiently, "what is the use of all this, when you know Alberton and her are so firmly attached to each other, that——"

"I am by no means convinced of that," replied Mrs. Irwin; "but, however, all I ask is for you to think seriously of this offer, and if Lord Alberton should not realise your expectations, or if anything should occur to alter those views, I hope you will do your best in favour of Edmund."

"Certainly—I am sure there does not exist another in the world, whom I would prefer to your nephew, if Lord Alberton——but, oh no—I am sure that it is settled —I am as sure as that I live, that Alberton will never think of any one but her."

"Well, well—but if he should," said Mrs. Irwin.

"Yes, if he should," returned aunt Rachel, in a tone of doubt.

From this time, and indeed for some time previous, Fanny felt, as Rachel had expressed it, greatly annoyed by Edmund Irwin's attentions.

Gay, giddy, and apparently good-humoured, possess-

ing a great talent for conversation, and considerable intelligence and information, Edmund Irwin had been a very pleasant companion; and Fanny had, perhaps, given him some encouragement to believe that his addresses would not be unwelcome, by the preference she had shewn to converse with him, rather than any other of the persons whom she met at Mr. Irwin's; but the fact was, there was no great compliment in this preference—for Mr. and Mrs. Irwin's associates were none of them such as could, by any possibility, assimilate with Fanny Levison; and she flew to Edmund's lively rattle and small-talk, as a refuge from the heavy dulness of the males, and the ill-natured scandal of the females of the *coterie*, who occasionally passed their evenings with her present hosts.

No sooner, however, was she awakened to the intentions of Mrs. Irwin and her nephew, than she resolved, at once, to put an end to them, by unequivocally avoiding to give Edmund any opportunity of conversing with her, and by treating him with the greatest reserve; but neither this, nor her positive refusal, when at length the proposition was formally made through her aunt, that she should bestow her hand on the self-sufficient young lawyer, could put an end to their hopes that she would eventually be brought (to use Mrs. Irwin's expression) "to see her own interest."

So long, however, as her aunt Rachel remained firm on her side, Fanny, though she felt annoyed by the importunities of Edmund and his aunt, (the latter of whom having, as she said, set her mind upon the match, was indefatigable in her endeavours to bring it about,) did not consider it worth seriously grieving for; consider-

ing, too, as she certainly did, at the bottom of her heart, that the first appearance of Lord Alberton would at once put an end to all their hopes, and her persecution.

In the first moments of mortification and sorrow, at discovering her real situation in the world, after her father's death, Fanny had been led to form many proud and romantic resolutions. She would never—never—see Alberton again! Oh no, degraded as she felt she was, she could not, if even he should be generous enough to overlook her loss of birth and fortune, ever bring herself to accept his offers; and, lest her heroism should be put to too severe a test, she was importunate with her aunt that they should leave Levison Hall, before Lord Alberton should come into the neighbourhood.

Though sorely puzzled to comprehend motives which appeared, to her plain, matter-of-fact understanding, as totally inconsistent with common sense, aunt Rachel was so accustomed to square her wishes and actions by those of her niece, that she yielded to her even in this point with little opposition.

Fanny, however, soon began to think more calmly on the subject; the letter of Lord Raeburn to her aunt, convinced her that the latter still remained unchanged by her reverse of fortune—and, from the first moment of her residence at Mrs. Irwin's, she had secretly indulged the pleasing idea that Alberton would speedily discover her retreat, and hasten to renew his vows.

Alas, most woefully were these visions of happiness dispersed, at the very moment when she believed herself most secure!

She was seated between her aunt and Mrs. Irwin, in one of the upper boxes of Drury Lane Theatre, and Mr.

Edmund Irwin, who was behind them, was at once displaying his acquaintance with the fashionable world, and gratifying his own vanity, in shewing himself to those around him as the intimate friend of the young beauty, who attracted universal admiration, by whispering, from time to time, the names or anecdotes of any one whom she appeared to consider particularly striking.

Among others whom Fanny's eyes rested on, were the two showy females, who have been before noticed as Mrs. Wilmington and Miss Delaney; the former, Fanny instantly recognised, and the recollections connected with the discovery occasioned her to change countenance, so as to attract the notice of her aunt, who, with some alarm, inquired the cause of it.

Fanny, in a low voice, communicated to her who it was that sat immediately opposite to them, and aunt Rachel instantly raised her glass to take a survey of the unblushing woman, by whom she had been once so egregiously deceived.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed, turning to Fanny, who had averted her eyes from one whom she could not look at without shuddering—"good gracious!" repeated the old lady, in a tone of undissembled surprise, "do look, Fanny—and tell me if I am right? Is not one of those gentlemen at the back of her box, Denzil himself? I mean, Lord Alberton," she added, correcting herself.

Fanny did look—and as hastily withdrew her eyes—it was him! She could not doubt it; and, to add to her distress at beholding him thus situated, the Irwins had all heard her aunt's indiscreet exclamation, and their eyes were now all fixed on the unsuspicious Alberton, whose attention seemed wholly engrossed by the gentleman to whom he was talking.

"I do not, after all, believe he is of their party," said the candid Rachel, "and, in a theatre, one is sometimes——"

"There can be no doubt, now," said Mrs. Irwin, in a triumphant tone. "See, his companion has taken his seat between them."

Fanny turned red and pale, ten times in a minute, and kept her eyes determinately fixed on the stage, though she knew nothing that was passing there, and heard nothing but the conversation which was going on between Mr. Irwin and his nephew behind her; in which she heard the latter remark, that, if that was Lord Alberton, of whom he had heard so much, he could only say that he believed there was not a greater rake upon town, unless, indeed, it was his present associate, Captain Danvers. I have often wondered who he was," continued young Irwin, "for he is constantly with the officers of the guards, lounging about in the morning, and—oh, I remember——yes, yes, I see now—it is the very person I mean—I have heard him called Danvers's pupil, but I never had the curiosity to inquire who he was."

"Are you sure, Edmund?" said Mr. Irwin, who usually took the good-natured side, "are you sure that you have seen him before?"

"I could take you to a house which they regularly frequent, and where I have seen that young hero sporting his hundreds, if not thousands, of a night."

"No, no—I should be sorry to be the witness of such a scene," said Mr. Irwin, "for his sake, and for the sake of——but, hush! say no more on the subject. Fanny, my dear, you look tired, and your aunt, I suspect, would rather not stay out the farce."

Miss Rachel assented—Edmund left the box to order

his uncle's carriage; and the party, under the protection of Mr. Irwin, slowly followed; but, if Fanny had before felt surprised and hurt at beholding Alberton in such unexpected society, what was her distress when her aunt, drawing her arm closer to hers, whispered——

"See, there he is again! and that shameless woman, too!"

Fanny comprehended nothing that was said to her—nothing that passed during their ride home; she answered, indeed, mechanically to what was addressed to her—but she could see nothing, think of nothing, but Alberton following Mrs. Wilmington into the hackney-coach, and her voice directing the coachman whither to drive.

She was soon, however, condemned to hear more than even this; for Edmund Irwin had witnessed a great part of the altercation between Mrs. Wilmington and her husband, and her subsequent appeal to Lord Alberton, and he now related the tale to his uncle, in the manner he thought best suited to promote his own purposes, representing Alberton as the cause of the separation between the husband and wife; and that the latter had finally outraged all common decency, by carrying her off with him. The servant's account, though not exactly the same, in part confirmed this tale, which was repeated by Mrs. Irwin to Miss Rachel, and from her to Fanny, as a convincing proof of Alberton's total degeneracy.

Fortunately, the very excess of vice which was attributed to Alberton, convinced Fanny that there was some misrepresentation in the whole affair. She recollected how hastily and wrongfully he had been judged before; and, even in spite of what she had herself seen, she determined to believe him innocent.

"I will never believe him guilty, till he pleads guilty himself," was her constant reply to her aunt; while to Mrs. Irwin she became even a more determined defender of his fame, and more decidedly than ever repugnant to the addresses of Mr. Edmund Irwin, whom she now absolutely hated, for the petty malignity which he displayed towards him whom he considered as his rival.

Affairs were in this position when Alberton's letter to Fanny, and Earl Raeburn's to Miss Rachel, were received.

For the first time since Fanny had arrived at years of discretion, her aunt acted without consulting her in a matter where she was concerned; but the old lady was gradually yielding herself entirely to the dominion of her presumptuous and domineering friend, Mrs. Irwin; and by her advice, before she even conferred with Fanny, was her reply, containing a decided rejection of Lord Alberton's proposal, forwarded to Earl Raeburn.

Fanny's letter, however, as we have seen, conveyed very different sentiments; and so far did both Lord Alberton and his father consider it in the light of an encouragement, that, within twenty-four hours of its receipt, they were both on their way towards London.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

In all
Such have I found him as my father said.
BYRON.

NEVER, perhaps, was surprise and consternation more unequivocally betrayed, than in the party which still lingered over the breakfast-table at Mr. Irwin's, when Earl Raeburn's carriage drew up to the door.

Unaccustomed to practise the fashionable mode of denial to visitors, by not choosing to be at home, there was no resource but to endeavour to put a good face on the matter, though Mrs. Irwin was ready to sink, as she declared, with surprise, at the intrusion.

The Earl and Lord Alberton were announced, and entered together; and, certainly, never did the countenance of guilt assume so open, so cheerful an aspect, as that worn by Alberton, who, without even glancing at Edmund Irwin, who seemed to shrink into half his usual dimensions at the approach of his dignified rival, advanced instantly to Fanny.

"You have called upon me to vindicate myself in the eyes of your friends, my dearest Fanny," he observed, "and I have come to obey your call."

"Bold in the consciousness of innocence, no doubt, my lord," said Mrs. Irwin, with her usual promptness and sarcastic sneer.

"Precisely so, madam," and Alberton bowed to her, with a smile which increased the bitterness with which she beheld him.

The Earl, who at first had addressed Miss Rachel, (who had found it very difficult to preserve the air of reserve and coolness she had thought it necessary to assume towards him,) now approached Fanny. It was evident that it cost him a considerable struggle to address her without confusion; but the frank and innocent pleasure with which she held out her hand to welcome him, seemed at once to restore his self-possession, and in a few moments they appeared on perfectly easy terms with each other; while Rachel, scarcely able to restrain her pleasure, yet evidently fearing to offend her severe friend Mrs. Irwin, hovered between her usual cordial kindness of manner, and an attempt to appear distant and reserved.

Mrs. Irwin sat frowning and biting her lips—Mr. Irwin, as usual, all fidget and good-humoured curiosity, seemed anxiously expecting the forth-coming explanation, while his nephew, at once foreseeing, from Alberton's assured easy manners, and Fanny's corresponding smiles, that all his own hopes were at an end, appeared to be revolving in his mind whether it would not be most expedient for him to withdraw, before he met with further mortification.

It would be useless to follow Lord Alberton in his eloquent defence of himself to Miss Rachel and Mrs. Irwin, since our readers are already in possession of the truth of the affair, which had been so misrepresented, and which had certainly borne a very strange appearance.

A letter from Mrs. Wilmington, in which she expressed

not only her gratitude for his opportune assistance, but her determination, by a life of honest industry, to expiate her former faults, confirmed "needlessly," as Miss Rachel observed, his explanation; and Mrs. Irwin, even against her own will, was compelled to acknowledge that it was a perfectly satisfactory explanation.

From motives of delicacy, Fanny had withdrawn to the adjoining room, the library, attended by Earl Raeburn, and followed by Edward Irwin, who eagerly sought an opportunity of pouring into her ear his sighs of regret and, as he said, hopeless despair, at being compelled to relinquish his cherished hopes.

Fanny's bright colour for a moment faded, and her eyes were cast down, as she listened to his impassioned expressions, and trembled lest his influence, and that of his relatives, might, even yet, intervene between her and happiness; but these fears were soon removed, when Alberton, with sparkling eyes, entered the room, and, advancing to her, whispered——

"Now then, my ever dear, ever beloved Fanny, I am at length permitted freely to claim you as my own!"

The Earl replaced the book which he had taken from the shelf, and Mr. Irwin, understanding his significant smile, led the way into the room in which the two old ladies were seated. His nephew, reluctantly, and with a look full of reproachful meaning to Fanny, who however did not observe it, followed in obedience to the signal he had received.

Fanny, too, arose, but she was gently detained by the enraptured Alberton, who, for the first time, enjoyed the precious privilege of breathing in her ear his vows of

never-ending love, and of pressing her to confirm his happiness by the last, the most sacred of ties.

Fanny, however, though above all affectation, was by no means prepared to accede to what she considered a most unseemly and hurried proposal; and the affair was at length compromised by her agreeing that Earl Raeburn and aunt Rachel should decide when the marriage ceremony should take place.

Finding that she had no longer a hope of advancing her nephew's interest, and delighting in the opportunity of being busy and of consequence, Mrs. Irwin at length condescended to relax from her haughty mood towards Lord Alberton, and enter with earnestness into the details which she and her friend Rachel considered necessary; and all Alberton's dislike of her was converted into gratitude, when he found that she had been a most strenuous advocate for shortening the period fixed for the performance of the marriage ceremony, which Rachel had at first decided should be six weeks from that day, but at her intercession had agreed it should take place at the end of one month; the old lady very adroitly, though not very delicately, hinting that Fanny had less need of preparation than was usual on such occasions, as she had already more bridal finery in her possession than fell to the lot of most young ladies.

Fortunately, neither Alberton or his father heard this allusion to past events, and were thus spared from some painful feelings; and a remonstrance from Miss Rachel prevented any repetition of it. But Mrs. Irwin was sadly disappointed, and not a little vexed, at Fanny's obstinately insisting that the ceremony should be performed as privately, and with as few witnesses as possible;

the propriety of which requisition was strongly though silently conceded by Lord Alberton and his father.

A month of unalloyed happiness, as regarded the present and the future, and only sometimes tinged with melancholy by a retrospection of the past, flew rapidly away. Rosa Somerville had, during this time, become again Fanny's inseparable companion, and Edmund Irwin, having already found consolation for the loss of Fanny in the smiles of the beautiful young heiress, and promising in reality to dismiss all his former follies and become worthy of his uncle and aunt's fond partiality, assisted to form a delightful *partie quarré*, while the old folks, among whom the Earl of Raeburn now contentedly took up his station, (being quite satisfied to find his happiness in that of his son,) employed themselves in arranging all that was necessary to the future prospects of the bride and bridegroom.

At the appointed time the nuptial ceremony took place, which confirmed, though it could not increase, the affection which had for so many years united the hearts of Alberton and his Fanny, and they immediately left town, accompanied only by Rosa Somerville, for Cheltenham; from whence they, after a fortnight's stay in that gay and fashionable sojourn, departed to join the Earl, Mr. Dormer, and Miss Rachel Levison, who, together with the Irwins, awaited their arrival in Cumberland; but, as if to convince them that human happiness can never long exist without some alloy, they found that a sad tale awaited them on their arrival.

Mrs. Charles Levison, forgetful of the ties of duty to her child, to herself, and to the memory of the husband she had lost under such peculiarly distressing circum-

stances, had become so infatuated by the seductive arts of St. George, that she had yielded to his persuasions and eloped with him, it was believed, to Italy; leaving Madame St. George in a state of distraction, at having bestowed herself and her fortune upon an ungrateful man, who had not even the decency to pretend kindness towards her, after he had attained his object of getting possession of her money.

As if to add to the enormity of Emma's guilty conduct, her neglected child died in convulsions, the very night she quitted her home; and Mrs. Lazenby, heartstruck at seeing all her hopes and schemes thus defeated, had taken to her bed, from which she never expected she would again arise.

Ever anxious to administer consolation to the afflicted, Fanny (now Lady Alberton) proposed to her aunt, on the morning after their arrival, to visit Mrs. Lazenby, whom, though she could not respect, she sincerely compassionated.

"And I, in the mean time," observed Lord Alberton, to whom she mentioned her intention, "will ride over towards the cottage which was the residence of Louison, and endeavour to learn some news of my little friend Jeannette, and her unfortunate sister."

Tears of compassion stood in Fanny's bright eyes, which he fondly kissed away, and they both departed on their errands of charity.

In a few hours, they met again—and it was plain that both had had much to agitate them.

"Have you time to spare a few minutes, before you go to dress, my love?" inquired Lord Alberton, as he assisted her from the carriage; and, reading her reply

in her looks, he led Fanny to the housekeeper's room, where she beheld the beautiful girl, for whom she had already been interested by the statement Alberton had given of his former interview with her.

Louison was dead—the charity of some of Madame St. George's servants, who were of the same country, had supplied the means of burying her; and poor Jeannette was left in the miserable cottage alone, to depend on the casual contributions of those who were compelled to bestow their favors in secret, lest Madame St. George should discover their kindness and her retreat, and by learning the story connected with her, would resent what they had done for the poor orphan.

There needed no other recommendation than her own beautiful and eloquent countenance, to bespeak Lady Alberton's favour for poor Jeannette; and tears for the loss of her poor Louison were quickly succeeded by smiles of gratitude on the countenance of Jeannette, when she found that she was indeed to remain under the protection of the beautiful lady, whom she soon learned to value for charms far more precious than she could at present estimate; and to whom she remained attached, with the most enthusiastic fervour, to the end of her existence, during which she was successively the play-fellow and nurse of the beautiful and amiable children of Lord and Lady Alberton, who shared her love with their parents, and rewarded her devotion to them by the fondest affection.

But, to return to our story, which we have rather anticipated.

The tale that Lady Alberton had to tell of her morning's visit, was of a far more *sombre* character; for the release

me, so far as to come to comfort me. I have behaved cruelly to you, Fanny—and all, too, for the sake of one who has deserted me—but I will not shock you again, I will not curse her with my dying breath, but I will pray that she may live to feel the bitterness of being deserted in her last hours, even by those for whom she has periled her soul."

Fanny was, during this speech, employed in searching the cabinet to which the invalid had pointed, but it was rather in obedience to the wish of Mrs. Lazenby, than any anticipation of the value and importance of the object of her search.

"That is it, Fanny," exclaimed the latter, her keen eye, even at that distance, instantly recognising the important paper which she saw.

It was a parchment deed of which she spoke, and a single glance told Fanny at once what was its purport. She beheld her father's signature, in his own well-known hand, and tears filled her eyes as she hastily folded it without farther examination.

"You are aware," said the humiliated Mrs. Lazenby, in a low tone, "that it is the will, which was supposed to be destroyed, or rather, it is the *copy* of that will. With the caution which distinguished most of his conduct, your father had left a copy in his escritoire at the Hall, at the time he left it to go to France. The wily lawyer was well aware of this, but he suppressed his knowledge to you and your aunt, determined to sound me, and see if he could make any advantage of it. I need not say, Fanny, that I fell into his snare—I purchased his silence, and——but I cannot pursue this degrading detail. You have the will, Fanny, and may you be as happy in the

possession of the wealth, that will now be yours, as I hope and trust she will be miserable and wretched, for whom——"

"Oh, do not be thus unforgiving," interrupted Fanny, who was shocked at the bitterness with which this unhappy woman spoke of her daughter's offences towards her, while she seemed to pass over, as comparatively light and venial, her own unprincipled offences, and to consider herself, indeed, almost praiseworthy, because it had been her love, as she said, for her daughter, and not any selfish motive, that had actuated her to act so basely and dishonestly.

The kind and well-meant reproof, however, which Lady Alberton intended to repress that harsh and mistaken feeling towards her erring daughter, had quite a different effect on Mrs. Lazenby. The attempt to soften Emma's conduct towards her, and suggest to her the truth that the errors of the latter were in a great measure attributable to the false system which she (Mrs. Lazenby) had all her life pursued, threw the latter into agonies of passion, and she loaded her absent daughter with curses and invectives, which sounded so horrible and unnatural in Fanny's gentle ears, that she was compelled abruptly to leave her.

In a few days after this important disclosure, Mrs. Lazenby died, having, even till her last moments, preserved the same implacable feeling towards her guilty daughter—a feeling of which she left a lasting record, in bequeathing all her fortune to distant relations, excepting only an annuity of one hundred pounds a year to her daughter Emma, being, as she observed, intended only to keep her from want, whenever her seducer deserted her—an event

which she confidently predicted would take place, at no great distance; and, as if to add to the galling mortification of this bequest, Lord Alberton was, without his knowledge, appointed her trustee, and directed to pay it only to herself, in quarterly payments.

It was long, however, before he was called upon to fulfil these directions; Madame St. George had quitted the neighbourhood of Levison Hall, and though a sigh would sometimes heave Fanny's compassionate bosom, when she thought of the fallen and consequently wretched Emma, all other trace of her was buried in oblivion until nearly five years after the happy period which had united the fate of Alberton and his beloved, when they received a visit from Rosa Somerville, who, however, had long before exchanged her name for that of Irwin, and had found, in the reclaimed Edward, if not precisely a Lord Alberton, a very successful imitator of his virtues.

Lady Alberton was at this time the mother of two beautiful boys, her friend Rosa had one girl; and never, perhaps, were a happier family circle collected, than that which, at the period we are speaking of, assembled round the hospitable fireside of Levison Hall, which Fanny and Lord Alberton now inhabited, having disposed of their other estate in the neighbourhood.

It was Christmas—the weather was even more than usually severe—for snow had fallen so thickly, for several days, that the roads were nearly impassable; but neither the inhabitants of Levison Hall, or the neighbourhood, for some miles around, felt much the inclemency of the season.

Within the Hall, mirth and festivity occupied every hour, and the bounteous liberality of Alberton and his lovely wife had been so judiciously exercised, that there

was not a cottage within their reach, in which plenty, and, as far as their influence and example could procure it, peace and harmony also, did not reign.

It had been always Mr. Levison's custom, at this joyous season, to entertain the whole of his tenants and their families with a dinner in the great hall, and the evening was concluded with a dance, in which all of the family, who had, as he was used to say, in old Capulet's phrase, "feet unplagued with corns," were accustomed to join; and with Fanny it was a point of sacred duty to honour the memory of her father, by diligently following his example.

On this occasion there was perhaps even a more numerous assembly collected than at any previous period —for, in addition to the usual inhabitants of the Hall, among whom were the kind-hearted and still active and happy aunt Rachel and Earl Raeburn, who, sick of the gay and great, seldom left his son and daughter, there were several visiters, including, as we have already noticed, Edmund Irwin and his beautiful Rosa.

Every window of the ancient Hall was streaming with light, as if to mock the deep darkness of the starless night, while the loud and joyous sounds of music, and the merry hum of mirthful steps and voices, rendered the howling of the storm that raged without, inaudible to its happy inmates. It was at this moment that the bell at the outer door was rung with a violence which occasioned some surprise to the jovial party, and occasioned Lord Alberton, who was just leading off the dance with the blooming daughter of one of his tenants, to pause suddenly and consign her to another partner, while he inquired who it was that had arrived at such an unseasonable hour.

It was the driver of a post-chaise from the nearest

town, which was nearly ten miles from the Hall; and Lord Alberton speedily learned that he had been employed to convey a lady and an infant (who had arrived at the Inn only a few hours before by the mail from London) to the Hall; but that the heavy snow had somewhat impeded his progress, that he had been benighted, had driven out of the road, and, finally, the chaise had been upset, and his unfortunate passenger was so seriously hurt, that he had been compelled to leave her in the broken carriage, about four miles off, and make his way with the horses, to the Hall, the lights of which fortunately guided him.

Lord Alberton scarcely waited to hear the conclusion of this tale, before he commenced preparations to hasten to the stranger's assistance. His light shoes were hastily exchanged for boots—a cloak was thrown over his dress—and, accompanied by at least a dozen sturdy rustics, who were too much exhilarated by their good cheer to heed the weather, he set out for the spot, which the half-frozen driver had pointed out, leaving the latter to recruit himself by a warm fire, and answer the questions, which poured in upon him, as to the lady—of whom, however, he could give but little farther account than he had done, except that she seemed very ill, and very melancholy; and when the master of the Inn had suggested that it was overlate to proceed on her journey, and recommended her to remain there till the morning, she replied that her business at the Hall was of too much consequence to be delayed even for an hour.

It cannot be supposed that Lord Alberton was wholly destitute of curiosity, as to who this stranger could be, though his humanity prompted him to fly instantly to her

"Give her to me! Oh, my poor—poor child!" she exclaimed.

Alberton started—the voice was well known to him, yet when or where he had heard it, he could not conjecture. They were now within a few minutes' walk of the Hall, and in gentle accents he entreated the stranger to be patient a few moments longer.

A low shriek answered him—"Denzil—oh, Denzil! Can it be possible that I have been saved by you?" exclaimed the stranger.

Alberton no longer doubted—it was, indeed, the wretched, guilty Emma; and, having hastily uttered a few words of consolation to her, he flew before the rest of the party, to prepare his beloved Fanny for the reception of her who would be to her like one risen from the grave, so little probability had there appeared, for some years, that they should ever see or hear from the misguided woman, who seemed to have totally lost all remembrance of her home or her connexions.

The sounds of mirth had ceased, when he re-entered the house—for all partook, or appeared to partake, of the anxiety which kept Lady Alberton pale and silent, listening with a throbbing heart, and gazing with earnest eye, through the half-opened door, which, cold as it was, seldom remained closed many minutes, so anxious were all to get some information of the absent party.

The flash of their torches was at last seen reflected on the snow-clad trees—the door was thrown open to its fullest width, and groups of curious and expectant faces collected close to it, in spite of the piercing northern blast, and the snow which drifted in upon them.

"Here is my lord!" exclaimed one, as Alberton,

throwing his torch away, and shaking the snow from his cloak, hastily entered the vestibule.

Lady Alberton rushed towards him—but, at the sight of his pale and hurried look, she started back.

"You were too late, then—the poor creature——"

"No, not so, my love!" he interrupted. "She is safe, and will be here in a few minutes; but you must retire, dearest—I have something to communicate," and he led her, as he spoke, towards the drawing-room, just as the party, who were still anxiously looking out, exclaimed——

"Oh, here they come!—here they all are!"

"Rosa! Mrs. Irwin!" exclaimed Lord Alberton, recollecting that it was equally necessary to prepare her for the meeting with Emma. "Rosa!" he again called, but Rosa was deaf to his call—for, with her shawl thrown over her head, she was peering out into the darkness, to reconnoitre the party, whose approach had been announced. Divided between the two objects, Alberton failed in both—for his agitated manner effectually defeated his intention to prepare his lady by degrees for the melancholy surprise which awaited her.

"Alberton, what has happened?" she exclaimed, "for Heaven's sake, keep me not in suspense! Who is it, that I may——"

A faint scream from Mrs. Irwin reached her at this moment.

"Good Heaven, what is this? The consequences of alarm may be fatal, in Rosa's situation," she added; and, before Lord Alberton could utter a word, she flew back to the assistance of her friend.

"Fanny, I am come to die in your arms!" exclaimed

the poor sufferer, fixing her hollow eyes on those of Lady Alberton, as the latter hesitatingly advanced towards her. Fanny uttered an exclamation of mingled hope, doubt, and alarm, and the next moment Emma was strained to her pure and gentle bosom—her follies, her errors, her crimes, all forgotten in the sufferings, which were but too plainly depicted in her care-worn frame and pallid countenance.

"And Rosa, too," said the poor sufferer, raising her head from Fanny's neck, where she had wept in silence for some minutes—"Rosa, too, has a kind look and a kind word for the poor, miserable wretch, who is conscious she deserves nothing but reproach and contempt?"

Rosa pressed the hand she was still holding——

"Do not talk so, Emma; all that is past, is forgotten —and you will henceforth be all your friends can wish."

"You are right, Rosa," she replied, with emphasis, "I shall be in my grave—and that is all my friends can wish for me! Fanny, they told me that my mother's dying curse was upon me——I have felt it was, but it cannot pursue me here! Oh, no—here I am safe, and my poor child, too, my poor babe!"

Fanny started, and looked round for the infant, but Jeannette had already carried it off to the nursery; and there, when she had seen the unfortunate mother placed in bed, and ascertained that she had received no material injury from the accident, though sadly bruised, Lady Alberton beheld and wept over the poor infant, who was, she saw, destined to be soon left motherless.

The child seemed to have sustained little injury from its exposure to the cold, and had been equally fortunate in escaping unhurt by the overturned vehicle; but it

was a sickly, weakly infant—and Jeannette, as she, after carefully feeding and warming it, proceeded to undress it, exclaimed——

"Ah, poor baby, it is well for you that you are come to have good nursing—for your poor mamma does not look as if she will be here long, to take care of you!"

"Have you any idea who the parents of that child are, Jeannette?" demanded Lady Alberton, looking steadfastly at her.

Jeannette looked surprised, as she replied in the negative—but the next moment it seemed all to rush into her mind, and, half pushing the child from her, she exclaimed——

"*Eh, mon dieu! est il possible! Oh, ma pauvre sœur, ma pauvre Louison!* He is dead, then?" she observed, looking in Lady Alberton's face.

"I do not know that, Jeannette—it does not follow, because we see this unfortunate babe here, and its still more unfortunate mother."

"Oh, *non est vrai*, it is true, indeed—he has, perhaps, deserted her, as he did——"

Jeannette burst into tears, as the recollection of her poor Louison, and all the events connected with her fate, rushed into her mind.

"Madame St. George is dead, this long time!" she observed.

Lady Alberton was surprised.

"How did you hear it, Jeannette?" she demanded.

"Pierre, Mr. Irwin's valet, told me," she replied, "his brother was servant to Madame, and she died in Paris two years since."

All that care, and tenderness, and skill could devise, to soothe and comfort Emma, was diligently employed by the kind friends with whom she was surrounded; but it was impossible to arrest the progress of the fatal disease which had seized upon her for its prey; and, in a very few days after her arrival at Levison Hall, those who were so deeply interested in her welfare became convinced that she was in a confirmed consumption, and fast sinking to an early grave. But, though she had at first expressed her own conviction that her case was hopeless, the change—from unfriended misery, reduced to nearly her last shilling, and burthened with a helpless infant—to ease and affluence, and constant attention and tenderness, had operated so forcibly on her naturally cheerful disposition, that she seemed to forget all the past, and indulge the most extravagant hopes for the future.

By degrees Lady Alberton heard from her own lips the detail of her adventures, after she had quitted Levison Hall.

Emma's seducer had, it appeared, acted in one respect more honorably than she probably had a right to expect—he had married her immediately after the death of his wife, who, having learned that he had, after making the tour of the Continent, finally settled in Paris, suddenly made her appearance there: and, in a fit of reviling and passion, had broken a blood vessel, from the effects of which she had died. But, though St. George had so far fulfilled his promises to the credulous Emma, he had, in other respects, fallen greatly short of them; and, far from enjoying that life of pleasure and liberty he had painted in such glowing colours, she soon found that she had bound herself to a life of slavery and miserable de-

pendance on the capricious humours of that most uncertain, and least to be depended on of all human beings—a gambler!

Constant ill-health, and the birth of four children, all of whom (except the last) died soon after they beheld the light; the severe pressure of poverty, at times, which was poorly compensated by superfluity at others, when fortune had been more favorable to her husband, all combined to break down the frame and the spirits of the unhappy Emma. The circumstances connected with her mother's death, too, had been conveyed to her, with all the exaggerations with which ignorant minds delight to paint events, of themselves sufficiently horrible. She fancied her mother's dying curse was always ringing in her ear—her children's deaths recalled, with horrid force, that of her first-born, which she had left to perish, unwept by a mother's care! The man who had tempted her to this unnatural conduct became hateful to her. Their reproaches were mutual, and they dragged on a wretched life, until a fever, brought on by excess, and aggravated by the prospect which awaited him of a prison, put an end to St. George's existence, and left her sick, helpless, and a widow, with an infant only three weeks old, in a strange land.

Left thus hopeless and destitute, her heart had turned with deep yearning to the scenes and the friends of her youth. To die in their bosom, to be laid in the same grave with her mother, and to leave her child to their care and tenderness, became her darling project; but it was not without difficulty she accomplished her journey. But, the haven gained, Emma's hopes and spirits, though not her health, revived. The affectionate kindness and

attention, so new to her—their forbearance on the subject of her past follies—and the certainty that she would be welcome to share with them the advantages of rank and affluence—altered greatly her sentiments with regard to dying; and she now as ardently wished to live, as she had before prayed to leave a world of misery. But the die was cast—the arrow had struck deep; and, within one little month from her arrival at the Hall, Emma was borne from it to her last earthly home.

From her first appearance, Lady Alberton and her other friends had been prepared for this event—for death had been marked, in legible characters, in her countenance; and it was to them a source of the greatest comfort that her last hours had been soothed by all the cares that affection, and all the consolations that religion, can bestow. Yet it was mournful to see one in the prime of life—gifted naturally with a kind heart and good disposition—and the possessor of more than ordinary personal attractions—thus sink a victim to her own folly, and the errors of evil example; and many and bitter were the tears which Lady Alberton and her friend, Mrs. Irwin, shed to her memory, ere time had softened it to a more gentle remembrance.

The child, who promised to inherit all the personal charms of her unfortunate mother, became the object of peculiar care to Lady Alberton, after whom she was named; and who, having no daughters, soon learned to consider the little Fanny as much her own as though she had really given her birth.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

> Is he a stranger?
> His voice and gestures seem familiar to me;
> I craved his name, but this he seemed reluctant
> To trust. BYRON.

SURROUNDED with all that could make life valuable, and occupied unceasingly in the endeavour to communicate to their less fortunate fellow-creatures some portion of that happiness which had fallen to their own lot, the life of Lord Alberton and his amiable partner passed on for several years, uninterrupted by any event of sufficient importance to disturb

> "The even tenor of 'their' way."

The death of the Earl of Raeburn, though in some measure prepared for it by a long and gradual decay of the powers of nature, was for a time a source of deep sorrow to them, not only for the loss of a kind, affectionate, and considerate friend; but that it revived, with painful accuracy, recollections which time and new impressions had softened and obscured.

Lady Alberton seemed again to lose the parent whom she had never ceased to regret; while her lord, in following to their last resting-place the remains of his lamented father, seemed again to live over those days of suffering and sorrow, which he had shared with his unfortunate mother.

The death of the Earl rendered it necessary that his son should, for some time, remain in the metropolis, which he had, for the last five or six years, only occasionally visited; and, unwilling to leave his beloved Fanny to brood over the melancholy which had taken possession of her mind, his lordship at length came to the resolution of taking his family with him, for the first time, to town; where, indeed, he found it would be absolutely necessary that he should henceforth reside for part of the year, being now called upon to assume his father's title and situation in the world.

For the first time, Lady Raeburn now threw open her doors to the gay and fashionable world; but, while she thus yielded the privacy, in which she had so long found her happiness, to the usages of society, she mentally resolved that neither the blandishments of pleasure, nor the seductions of fashion, should withdraw her, more than she could possibly avoid, from her children, to whom she was ever the most revered instructor, the most confidential friend, and the most welcome and valued companion.

In compliance with this resolution, in all her walks and rides, and indeed on every occasion where they could be introduced without impropriety or injury to their simple and unsophisticated manners, the young Lord Raeburn, his brothers Frederic and Charles, and their sister Fanny (as they were taught to call her) were the constant companions of their still-beautiful mother.

On one of these occasions, they had left the carriage, to walk through Hyde Park, having ordered it to meet them at Kensington Gate. With her two elder boys, one on each side of her, and preceded by Fanny and the

youngest, Lady Alberton walked cheerfully and fearlessly along, talking, laughing, and occasionally seriously joining in the wishes the boys expressed, that the time were arrived which would restore them to the unconstrained enjoyments of the country, for which they considered the present scene but a poor substitute.

They had proceeded about half way through the park, when a man, whose appearance bespoke the most abject poverty, and whose pallid and haggard countenance betrayed the ravages of disease rather than time, slowly approached them, apparently with the intention of soliciting alms.

"Poor man! how ill he looks!" said one of the boys, hastily putting his hand in his pocket; while Lady Raeburn herself made a similar movement, to relieve the object of their pity; but, to her extreme surprise and that of the boys, after a hasty glance at the party, the supposed mendicant turned abruptly away, as if to avoid them, and continued his walk.

The children, in the mean time, had been busily contributing their silver to make up a sum sufficient to satisfy their benevolent purposes, and they now turned eagerly to their mother for her contribution.

"I would willingly give it, my dear children," said she, "for, certainly, the poor creature looks as if he sadly needs assistance—but he seems rather to wish to avoid us, than——"

"Oh, give it me, mamma," exclaimed the eldest boy; "poor creature, he has not been used to beg, I dare say; but I will give it him, so that he cannot be hurt." And, catching the money from his mother's half-doubtful hand, he flew away after the object of his compassion, who was

now at some distance, having quickened his pace more than could have been expected from his emaciated appearance.

"Do not look back, my dears," said Lady Raeburn, walking slowly on; "it will perhaps give pain to this poor man, to see that he is the object of curiosity. Your brother will soon rejoin us, and then we shall hear how he has succeeded in his errand."

Contrary, however, to her ladyship's prediction, a considerable period elapsed, and still the young Lord Alberton did not return.

"He is still talking with the poor man, mamma," said Fanny, whose impatience could no longer be kept in check, and whose quick eye had, in spite of Lady Raeburn's interdiction, more than once glanced back towards the object of her anxiety.

"Well, then, we will here await his joining us," returned Lady Raeburn, advancing to one of the seats. At this moment a horse, which had taken fright, and thrown his rider, was seen galloping wildly and furiously towards the spot where they stood; and the few passengers who were near them, fled in every direction.

The terrified mother hastily drew the children close to her, and uttered a fervent prayer for their safety, and the frighted animal bounded past them at only a few paces distance; but scarcely had she breathed, scarcely felt the consciousness that the danger was past, before a frenzied scream from her darling Fanny, who, scarcely thinking of herself, had still kept her eyes fixed on her favorite brother, (as she called Lord Alberton) betrayed to the distracted mother the danger of her child. She saw him start forward—heedless of his own danger—his

eyes fixed on, and his arms stretched towards his mother, whose peril he had seen——The next moment he was senseless and bleeding on the ground, and his unhappy mother, regardless of the shrieks and terrors of her other children, flew forward, and fell fainting beside him.

When Lady Raeburn recovered her recollection, she was in her own carriage, supported in the arms of her friend Rosa (Mrs. Irwin), and little Fanny holding her hand, and weeping over her. For some minutes she gazed wildly around, unable to recal to her recollection what had happened; but the terrified and sorrowful expression of Fanny's features, seemed suddenly to bring to her mind the fatal truth, and with frantic cries she demanded her child.

"They are all safe, dear Fanny—compose yourself, pray do; for the sake of your children, your husband, exert yourself to conquer these wild feelings," said Mrs. Irwin.

"For the sake of my children, Rosa," repeated Lady Raeburn, emphatically. "Have I any children?"

"Oh, yes, dear, dear mamma, I am here!" exclaimed little Fanny, clinging still closer to her.

"And your brothers, Fanny—where are they?" exclaimed the distracted mother.

The child looked at Mrs. Irwin, as if at a loss what to say—and Lady Raeburn, clasping her hands in agony, added—"Oh yes, yes, it is so—I see it all—both, both my darlings, at one blow!"

"No, no, indeed it is not so, mamma—Frederic is well—quite well—but he would not leave his brother—they tried to take him away from him——"

"Listen to me calmly, Fanny," said Mrs. Irwin, "and

I will not deceive you. One of your children is unhurt —the other has received some injury; but I trust—I hope——" She burst into tears, and Lady Raeburn, in a voice of more composure, said——

"I understand you, Rosa—he is dead!"

"No, on my sacred word, he was not, when I saw him taken away to receive medical assistance. On the contrary, he was perfectly sensible, and called to me to take care of his mother."

Lady Alberton burst into tears—They were the first she had shed, and their effects were most refreshing to her agonised heart. In a short time, she was sufficiently recovered for Mrs. Irwin to give directions to the coachman to drive slowly on to the surgeon's, whither the wounded child had been taken; but before they arrived there, he had been removed to his own residence, and the surgeon had accompanied him.

To Lady Raeburn's agitated inquiries, assurances were positively returned that the young gentleman was not seriously hurt, and that she would find her other son safe at home with him.

"Let us go, then, instantly," said the anxious mother, turning back to the carriage—for, too impatient to wait, she had sprung out of it the moment it had stopped, under the expectation of beholding her child.

There were several people, whom curiosity or perhaps some better feeling had detained, lingering around the surgeon's door; but Lady Raeburn passed through them, without being conscious that she was the object of universal observation.

As the carriage-door was being closed by the servant, however, she heard a man exclaim—

"Yes, yes, that's the mother—but though it is all very natural that she should be anxious about her child, one would think she might bestow a little compassion upon the poor fellow that got so cruelly hurt in trying to save it. But he's taken off to the Hospital, and there, I suppose, he may lie and die, because he's a poor man!"

"Who are you speaking of?" demanded Lady Raeburn, beckoning the man to the carriage-window.

"Why, my lady, the poor man that tried to save the young gentleman was cruelly hurt," he replied; "and I think it but right you should be told of it—for, though he's but a poor man, my lady, his life is as valuable, may be, to his wife and children, if he's got any——"

"You are quite right, my good friend," replied Lady Raeburn, "and if you will go with my servant to the place you mention, you shall have the satisfaction of seeing that all that can be done to assist him, and reward his humanity, shall be done."

The man looked abashed, and murmured some excuses for having spoken so freely—and Lady Raeburn having given her purse to the footman, with instructions to apply it for the use of the poor man, and to assure him that Lord Raeburn himself would see him in a short time—if, as she earnestly hoped, he would be able to see his lordship—drove off, followed by the blessings and good wishes for her child's recovery of all who beheld her.

At the house-door she was met by Lord Raeburn, whose looks, though pale and agitated, spoke comfort to her.

"He is seriously, but not dangerously hurt, my love," he replied, in answer to her rapid inquiries; "but he bears it like a little hero—and is more anxious on your

account than his own. Summon, therefore, all your fortitude, and let him see that you are recovered—for though I was aware, from Mrs. Irwin's account, that you had only fainted, nothing that I could say could convince him that you were not dead."

In a few minutes Lady Raeburn was by the bed-side of the sufferer, who, she found, had received no other injury than a fractured arm, and some few bruises.

"But I should have been killed," he exclaimed, "but for the poor man, who threw himself over me—for the vicious animal made a second plunge, and the poor man received all the——"

"Tell me, my love," interrupted Lord Raeburn, addressing his wife, "was the poor creature, whose humanity saved our child's life, properly attended to?"

Lady Raeburn replied by relating what had passed at the surgeon's door; and the Earl, having commended what she had done, proceeded to quiet the animated regrets of his son, by assuring him that, if the object of his anxiety was not fatally injured, his benevolent action should be rewarded, to the utmost of his own wishes.

"And if it should unfortunately prove that he is beyond our power to reward," concluded his lordship, "it will be our satisfaction to reflect that this last disinterested action of his life, will entitle him to a reward far greater and more durable than it is in our power to bestow."

It was not until now, in consequence of some remark of Frederic, who still stood by his brother, never having quitted him from the moment of the accident, that Lady Raeburn learned that the person, who was now the object

of so much anxiety and commiseration, was the identical mendicant whose apparent misery had induced her son to quit her side, and by his attempt to relieve him had become exposed to the accident from which he was suffering. But if this increased the gratitude and compassion she felt towards him, how much more did it excite the interest both of her and Lord Raeburn, when they heard, from the same source, that the poor creature had declared he should die happy, in having saved the child of one to whom he had been deeply indebted, and whom he had deeply injured.

The surprise of both the Earl and Countess was extreme at this disclosure; and it was not lessened, when, on the return of the servant from St. George's Hospital, to which the sufferer had been conveyed, they learned that the latter had at first shrunk with horror at the thought of receiving a visit from Lord Raeburn, and had positively refused to receive the money which the servant was charged to deliver to him.

The assurances of the surgeons, however, that, frightful and dangerous as were the wounds he had received, there were yet strong hopes that they would not prove fatal, seemed to effect a considerable change in the sentiments of the patient.

"I was in hopes," he observed, "that my miseries were drawing to a speedy close, and that the memory of what I was, would die with me."

The servant took advantage of this favourable moment again to press his acceptance of the money that Lady Raeburn had sent, observing, that he would probably have a long confinement, and that he would not find it very pleasant without money.

"You are right, young man," he replied, "even here, in the abode of charity, money is the chief object."

"Besides," said the servant, without replying to his observation, but anxious only to discharge his errand in a manner that he knew would be acceptable to his mistress—"besides, though you may not want money here, as indeed you won't, seeing every thing is provided for you much better, I dare say, than you've been used to—yet perhaps you have got a wife or children——"

The man impatiently interrupted him—"No, no, no—I have no wife—no children—no one to care for me—no one!" and he burst into a flood of passionate tears, "no one to lament me, or shed a tear upon my grave."

"I'm sure you need not say that, my good man," said the compassionate Ned, who, "albeit unused to the melting mood," felt his own eyes brimfull with sympathy, "for I'm sure my poor lady cried bitterly, when she heard you were so seriously hurt."

"Did she? Heaven bless her, and make her worthy of the best of human beings!" exclaimed the poor man.

"Well, come now," rejoined the homely and plain-speaking servant, "I'm glad to see you are going to cheer up a bit—and so I'll leave you to the care of these good people, who, I'm sure, will do the best they can for you—and I'll tell my lady, if you've no objection, that you send your humble duty to her, and will be glad to see my lord, whenever he likes to come."

During this speech, the eyes of the sufferer had been intently fixed on the face of the speaker.

"You do not know me, then," he at last observed, "I do not wonder at it—for, until this moment, I did not remember you—though time has rather improved than otherwise that honest countenance, while misery and

guilt has worn me to the bone! I see you do not even yet recognize me—and I am not sorry for it," he continued. "Should your master's memory be equally treacherous, it will spare me some mortification."

In silent wonder, Ned had continued to scan features which he in vain endeavoured to recal to his remembrance; but, in addition to the change which he had himself spoken of, there was another circumstance, of which the invalid did not seem to be aware, namely, that one of the blows which he had received from the heels of the horse, had so much swollen and discoloured his face, that it scarcely appeared human. The long tangled hair, too, that fell about his ears, and the unshaven grisly beard, added to the wildness of his appearance, and continued to baffle all Ned's attempts to discover, in the wretched being before him, an old acquaintance, which the man's words led him to suppose he was.

"One would think, if I could not remember his face, I should have known his voice, my lord," he observed, when repeating the circumstances that had passed at this interview; "but I did not—and, indeed, I don't think, in all my life, I ever heard such a hoarse hollow sound—it sounded just as if it came out of a grave, and made me, two or three times, quite shudder."

It cannot but be supposed that this relation increased tenfold the anxiety of the Earl to behold the man who had thus powerfully excited Ned's curiosity, as well as his better feelings; and, accordingly, the moment that the object of his first anxiety—his boy—was pronounced to be free from pain, and enjoying a refreshing sleep, he left him to the care of his anxious mother, and proceeded to the Hospital, attended by Ned.

The man who was the object of his curiosity was sleeping when he approached the bed on which he was laid, and Lord Raeburn sat quietly down to await his awakening, having forbidden the nurse to disturb him.

During this period of suspense and expectation, a thousand different conjectures, as to who this unhappy being could be, passed through his mind; but it was in vain that, by the most careful examination of his features, which were entirely exposed to view, he endeavoured to draw a conclusion.

The sleep of the sufferer, which had at first appeared quiet, became disturbed; and some words escaped his lips, among which Lord Raeburn plainly distinguished the name of "Tyrrell" and "Montgomery," while a pang, occasioned apparently by recollections connected with those names, convulsed his already disfigured features into absolutely hideousness.

Lord Raeburn uttered an involuntary ejaculation, and the man started, and opened his eyes full upon his face.

"You are come, then, to triumph in my wretchedness, Denzil?" he exclaimed, in a hoarse voice.

"Delaney!" exclaimed Lord Raeburn, in a tone of mingled doubt and suspense. "Can it, indeed, be him!"

"Yes, that is the name I once bore," he replied; "but you need not tell every one that the wretched Delaney is dying in a prison—a felon, a convicted felon!"—he continued, muttering between his teeth, and then looking wildly around to see if he was observed.

The Earl now discovered that the wretched man was delirious, and in a soothing tone he observed——

"You are ill, Delaney—your sound mind is disturbed

by your bodily anguish; but, be assured, you are with those who will do all in their power to mitigate your sufferings."

"Where am I, then?" he again demanded, looking inquiringly around, "am I not in a prison?"

"No, no—you are with friends who will do all in their power for you," repeated Lord Raeburn.

By degrees the unhappy Delaney became composed, and able to comprehend his situation, and the circumstances that brought him there; and the Earl listened, with the deepest compassion and sympathy, to the expressions of mingled repentance and despair, which broke involuntarily from his lips.

All that humanity could suggest, did the latter adduce to console the wretched Delaney, from whom he at length learned the particulars of his history, from the period when he had, in consequence of his crime against the laws, been banished from his native country. Of the conduct of his wife and family on that occasion, he spoke in terms of the bitterest condemnation.

"Even the children," he observed, "for whose advancement in life I had been incessantly occupied—for whom I had planned, night and day, a thousand schemes—and to support whom in luxury all my means, and all my talents were employed—even they abandoned me! My son, who by my means had been enabled to marry a woman of fortune, wrote to reproach me with having disgraced him, and compelled him to quit the country, refusing me even the paltry trifle which I requested, to lighten the miseries of my prison. My wife, my daughters, all—all abandoned me—and I was left to bear all the horrors of my fate, without one single consolation.

"I saw even the lowest, the most abandoned of the wretched beings with whom I was associated, soothed by the tears and regrets of some to whom they were dear—but I, I was alone in the world—no one mourned my departure—no one attempted to lessen the horrors of my imprisonment, or endeavour to conciliate my gaolers, and induce them to regard me with favour!—I was left to bear the full penalty of the crime, which I had principally been led into by my over-anxiety for those who now were foremost to desert me!"

"And have you never seen any part of your family since?" inquired Earl Raeburn, who at this moment recollected that Mrs. Wilmington, the *ci-devant* Julia Delaney, lived within a few minutes' walk from the place which had given her father, in all probability, his last asylum.

"Chance," he resumed, "has at different times thrown me in the way of all of them, except Julia, of whom I have never learned any tidings. Some circumstances, too long now to repeat, having recommended me to the favour of the government, when only half the term for which I was banished had expired, the remainder of my sentence was remitted, and I was set at liberty. Had I chosen to remain there, I might have again prospered—but, though they had forgotten me, I could never cease to remember that I had a wife and children. I had seen the errors of my ways, and was determined to amend them—and I longed to restore also to the right road, those whom I felt my example had seduced into error.

"Fortune seemed to favour my wishes—four years after I had quitted it, a wretched, hopeless, heartless being, I arrived again in my native land—my health re-

stored, my mind at ease, on my own account at least, and possessed of a sum, which, though I should once have thought it an insignificant trifle, being now the earnings of honest industry, appeared of considerable importance in my eyes.

"It was with great difficulty I traced my wife—her tale of the injuries she had endured from me, had answered her purpose. She was living in comfort—in affluence, compared to my situation, and she shrunk from me as from a poisonous reptile. Her friends all took her part—I was a monster, a wretch, devoid of every feeling, to intrude myself upon her! But that which settled the whole matter, and made me fly from her with more real disgust than I could have believed it possible I could feel, was the expression of her belief that I was not legally discharged from the penalty I had incurred, accompanied by the threat that she would give information of my return to the proper authorities, if I persisted in my claim upon her.

"I have never seen her since—and, for my children, my son has absolutely refused me even the means to procure a meal, when I was reduced to beg it of him! One of my daughters I have lived to see reduced to as great misery as myself—though, when I found her out, she was living in a style which would not suffer her to acknowledge her father?"

"Julia, then, you have never seen?" observed Lord Raeburn.

"No," he replied. "Heart-sick at the reception I met with from my other children, I did not take any great trouble to trace Julia—from whom, perhaps, I should have only heard a repetition of those reproaches which

her sister loaded me with, when I last beheld her. Poor girl, perhaps, after all, she was right—yet it was hard to hear it from her, whose interest I believed I was consulting in what I did."

The Earl interrupted the melancholy reverie into which the unhappy man had fallen, entreating him to make his mind easy, as in future he would take care to secure him from a repetition of the misfortunes which had attended him.

"I will leave you now," continued the Earl, "to the repose which, I trust, will restore you—and, to-morrow morning, if you find yourself able to bear it, you shall be removed from this place."

Delaney pressed with warmth the Earl's hand—but he was too much agitated to speak, and the latter left him.

From the period when his interference had rescued Julia from her wretched degradation, and enabled her by liberal pecuniary assistance to adopt the plan she had marked out for her future subsistence, Lord Raeburn had never beheld her—but he had had the gratification of knowing, from her repeated grateful communications, that her endeavours had been crowned with success, and that she was then mistress of a flourishing business, in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly.

Without hesitation, therefore, he bent his steps thither, and was received with every mark of respect and gratitude by Mrs. Wilmington, to whom, by degrees, he revealed the situation of her father.

Little reason as she had to respect the parent to whose pernicious counsels and example the errors of her former life were undoubtedly to be attributed, Julia yet could not hear of his lamentable state without a sorrow and

emotion which rendered her far more amiable, in Lord Raeburn's eyes, than she had ever appeared before. She declared her intention to go immediately to him, and also to have him removed to her own house, where she could pay him proper attention; and the Earl, anxious to be witness of an interview so interesting, as well as to afford every assistance in his power, proposed instantly to return with her to the Hospital.

The invalid was raised up in bed when they approached him, and his eyes were instantly fixed on his daughter, while an exclamation of surprise broke from his lips, which was instantly succeeded by a burst of tears, that proved, more incontrovertibly than words could have done, the reality of those feelings which, contrasting them with his former apparent insensibility, Earl Raeburn might have supposed exaggerated.

Some minutes elapsed before his daughter could recognize her unhappy relative in the object before her; but she became at length convinced that it was indeed her father, and was about to go round to the other side of the bed, that she might be nearer to him, when a man who appeared to be a patient, and who had been standing opposite, with his eyes fixed on her and Earl Raeburn, from the moment of their entrance, hastily approached, and laying his hand on her arm, exclaimed—

"Julia, we meet then again, once more in this world!"

"Who are you?" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmington, starting back in alarm, and gazing at the pale emaciated face which met her view.

"You do not know me?" said the man, in a taunting, contemptuous tone. "I do not wonder at it! with one so every way preferable by your side," (and he glanced

at Lord Raeburn,) "it is not likely you would wish to acknowledge your wretched husband. Yes, you start, Julia—but, though you may wish to avoid me, you cannot deny that I have a husband's right to claim you—nay, and I will do so, in spite of your paramour there!" again darting a fierce look at the Earl.

"Good heavens! this is, indeed, a strange fatality!" exclaimed the latter; "but be assured, my friend, you are under a delusion—for, until within this last hour, I have not seen your wife for many years."

"It is a lie! a false lie!" exclaimed the man, with vehemence. "Did I not myself behold you with her, when I last tried to draw from her pity some assistance to save me—but no matter, I have found her now, and from me she shall never again escape alive!"

Before Lord Raeburn could utter another word, or rescue the unfortunate Julia from his menaced blow, the maniac-husband (for such it now appeared he was) rushed upon her with a knife, which he had kept, from the first moment of her appearance, concealed in his hand.

The Earl caught his arm, as it was a second time raised; but the first blow had been effectual—and when, by the powerful exertion of the former, the murderer was compelled to relinquish his hold, the unfortunate woman fell, bleeding and senseless, on the foot of her father's bed.

All was now uproar and confusion—the maniac, with all the desperate and almost supernatural strength of frenzy, continued to struggle against the efforts of Lord Raeburn, and those who had come to his assistance, to prevent his doing further mischief. The agonised groans of the unfortunate Julia, and the shrieks of her father,

who thus beheld his last hope and tie in this world torn violently from him, at the very moment when he had learned to value it, and to feel that life still had something left to render it valuable—altogether presented a most appalling spectacle.

The sturdy strength of Ned, however, who was waiting in the Hall for his master's return, and to whom it had flown like lightning, that that beloved master was in danger, decided the contest. The wretched maniac was secured and strapped down to his bed, from which, it appeared, he had only been released a few hours, having been previously attacked with similar paroxysms of frenzy.

The situation of the wounded woman now became the object of Lord Raeburn's care—but he was soon convinced that the blow would prove fatal. She was raised up—and the expression of her eyes, as she turned them alternately from him to her father, shewed that she still retained her senses and recollection, though she was unable otherwise to give utterance to her wishes.

Delaney was in agonies—he uttered a thousand self-reproaches, as he gazed upon the dying countenance of his hapless daughter; and then transferred his maledictions from himself to the maniac husband, who, however, seemed now totally unconscious of the part he had acted in the fatal tragedy, and continued to rave incoherently, without noticing or replying to the reproaches which were bestowed upon him.

In less than one hour from her entrance into the presence of her father, the once gay and beautiful Julia was taken from his sight, a lifeless corpse! Yet, shocked and wounded as he was by this awful termination of her life, Delaney declared himself happier than he was while he

was in ignorance of her fate, and believing that she was experiencing all the horrors of guilt and destitution.

Before her remains were committed to the earth, the death of her wretched husband, who never recovered his senses sufficiently to be conscious of the crimes he had committed, relieved those who were interested from all further concern on his account. Delaney, as soon as he could with safety be removed, was, by the Earl's care, placed in comfort and respectability; and, during the few years of life that remained to him, continued to deserve the favour that was shown to him. With the sons of his benefactor he became an especial favourite, and one from whom they never parted, when they left London to pass their pleasant summers in the country, without regret; for, still retaining that peculiar talent of rendering his conversation attractive and pleasant to his hearers, he now joined to it the more useful quality of making it beneficial to them, by painting Virtue in her true colours, and giving to Vice her proper deformities. Nor did he even shrink from avowing to them that none was ever better qualified to pourtray the miseries attendant upon guilt and falsehood, than himself, who had so long wandered in the paths of vice; nor did he forget to point the moral of his lessons by shewing them that, even now, with all the favourable circumstances around him—possessing ease, health, and competency—he was still unhappy. The memory of his past crimes still rose to reproach him—and the consciousness how little he deserved the respect which his apparent blamelessness of life elicited from those who knew nothing of his former errors, seemed, as he often said, to render it a burthen to him.

The fate of his youngest daughter, too, long lay

heavy on his mind. The last time he had beheld her, it was in penury—little removed from what he was then suffering himself; but that circumstance had created no sympathy for him, in her mind. She had reproached him, bitterly reproached him, with having been the cause of all her errors and all her sufferings; and the justice of that reproach, now more than ever embittered his moments of reflection, while fancy painted her often suffering all the horrors which experience had taught him ever fell to the lot of the friendless.

From these conjectures he was, however, at length happily relieved, through the means of those whom he with justice styled his guardian angels. His daughter, after a long and persevering search, which Earl Raeburn, without acquainting him, had occasioned to be carried on for nearly three years, was at length discovered; and it was found that Miss Delaney, after numerous vicissitudes, had become the wife of a poor but honest man, who was then struggling with the pressure of indigence and sickness; and that she had effectually redeemed her former errors, by the strictness with which she discharged her duty to her husband and her two children.

The benevolent interference of Lord Raeburn was again exerted, and Delaney had the supreme delight of being re-united to his daughter, and beholding her raised from penury to comfort—her husband grateful and attached, and her children inheriting the beauty and intelligence of their mother, without the probability that the possession would be abused, as it had been in her case.

Happy, supremely happy in each other's love, and in the reflection of their own virtues and accomplishments in those of their children, the lives of Lord Raeburn and

Fanny passed on like a clear and spotless mirror, upon which no sullying cloud alighted to damp its brightness; and their friends, Irwin and his beautiful Rosa, seemed to emulate them in the purity and benevolence of their lives.

"I sometimes think it is possible to be too happy, Fanny," said the latter to her friend, when they were one day contemplating their children, from the window of the dressing-room, engaged in some amusement on the lawn beneath.

"Here," she continued, "I have been eleven years married—am almost thirty—and have never known a single misfortune or a day's uneasiness. 'Can this last for ever?' I sometimes say to myself; and then the terror, that, should it be interrupted, I should not have proper fortitude——"

"Hush, hush, Rosa, do not talk thus," interrupted her friend; "it appears like ingratitude to the beneficent Providence which has so favoured us! Come," she continued, assuming a livelier air, "let us go and join those urchins; and, if you are disposed to play the part of "The Woman never Vexed," I will whisper it in Edmund's ear, and see if he cannot contrive a cross for you; or shall I say to you, in the words addressed to that character, in the comedy," she added, resuming her gravity—

> "Do not appoint the rod;
> "Leave still the stroke unto the magistrate—
> "The time is not past, but you may feel enough."

Mrs. Irwin made no reply—but her thoughtful look, and half-suppressed sigh, betrayed that she felt the truth

of her friend's remark; and, passing her arm through Lady Raeburn's, she descended with her to the lawn, to join the children.

Before, however, they could reach the spot where they had from the window beheld them, they had all vanished, and the two happy mothers could hear their loud laughter and snatches of merry songs, among the thick branches of the plantation, which was almost impervious, from the verdant load of leaves and blossoms.

"They are gone off the nearest way, to meet their fathers," said Lady Raeburn. "We will await them here," and she threw herself on a seat, which the children had left strewed with the wild garlands they had been making.

Mrs. Irwin, however, was not inclined to be stationary. She was restless—she knew not why, she said,—but Lady Raeburn instantly yielded to her suggestion, and they proceeded on the path the children had taken. Suddenly a scream, which seemed to rend the air, arose; and the agitated mothers, with an exclamation of terror, flew onwards. The scream was repeated, and the loud barking of a dog was followed by an authoritative command from a manly voice, which seemed to have the desired effect; and when they came in sight of the youthful group, they beheld the boys encircling the girls, as if to protect them—while a stranger, to whom the dogs belonged which had been the occasion of terror, was endeavouring to re-assure the affrighted children, and convince them that the dogs had only been actuated by sportiveness, and wished to join in their play.

"It is very rough play, though, sir," said one of the boys, "and I do not wonder that poor little Rosa

screamed—Look how he has marked her shoulder with his great paw, leaping on her."

The stranger looked earnestly at the child, who was a blooming cherub, not more than four years old.

"Is your name Rosa, my love?" he demanded, kissing her glowing cheek.

The child replied in the affirmative—and then, at that moment espying her mother, who had come up close behind them, added, "And mamma's name is Rosa, too."

"Yes, yes, too well I know it," he answered.

Mrs. Irwin started, and the stranger, whose attention had been so wholly taken up with the child as not to have seen her, now turned suddenly round and uttered a hasty and confused apology, stooping at the same time and caressing his two beautiful dogs, as if to disguise his embarrassment, and prevent any examination of his features.

The boys were all anxious to vindicate themselves from any blame in not having taken sufficient care of little Rosa, whom they had been especially entrusted with, on the promise of making her the peculiar object of their care. Mrs. Irwin was occupied in listening to their explanations, and soothing her little darling, who still viewed the two great dogs with some remains of her former terror. Lady Raeburn, in the mean time, had sufficient leisure and presence of mind to mark with astonishment the strange embarrassment of the stranger; who, while apparently anxious only to explain to her the groundless cause of the alarm of the little girl, was evidently occupied with other thoughts and recollections than those connected with the present affair; and who, when he at length took leave, seemed to go reluctantly,

and yet to be glad to be relieved of the observation of those to whom he had been so unexpectedly introduced.

"That is our new neighbour, I suspect, who has taken the pretty cottage in the vale, which you so much admire," observed Lady Raeburn, addressing her friend. "He is rather a singular character, I understand—for he declines mixing at all in society, on the plea of ill-health, yet rambles over hill and dale with his two companions, from morning till night—and certainly, to judge from his looks, and the activity he displayed in leaping yonder hedge, I should give very little credit to his plea, and suspect that he has some other motive for his seclusion."

"Perhaps the youth is melancholy—crossed in love," said Mrs. Irwin, laughing; "but what sort of a creature was it, Fanny, for I scarcely looked at him?"

"He looked at you enough," replied Lady Raeburn, smiling; "and, indeed, had I not often heard you say that you never had a lover but him you made a husband of, I should have guessed this gentleman to have been one whom your cruel rejection had some time driven to despair."

Mrs. Irwin laughed heartily at the conceit; but, though she declared she had never, to her recollection, beheld the person who was the subject of their discussion, her friend could not divest herself of the idea that he perfectly recollected her, and beheld her with considerable emotion.

At dinner, the subject of their transitory alarm, and interview with the inhabitant of Beech Cottage, as his residence was called, formed one of the topics of conversation.

"I have seen his dogs repeatedly, and beautiful creatures they are," observed the Earl, "but I have tried in vain to cultivate a good understanding with their master —for, whenever he has crossed my path, he flies off in an opposite direction, or affects not to see me. I understand, however, that he has recently returned from the East Indies, and that, plain and retired as he lives, Mr. Meredith is possessed of an immense sum of money, and that he is very liberal and benevolent."

"Is his name Meredith?" repeated Mrs. Irwin. "Then I am now quite sure, Fanny, you were mistaken; for I never in my life knew one of that name. Would you believe it," she continued, turning to her husband, "that Lady Raeburn was inclined to write a little romance this morning, of which I was to be the heroine, and this retired East Indian Nabob, or whatever he is, the hero?"

"How could that possibly enter her ladyship's head?" returned Mr. Irwin, with a look of great surprise.

Unconscious of any evil, or the possibility of any misconstruction, the artless Rosa proceeded to relate the observations Lady Raeburn had made upon the look and manners of the stranger; and, when she had concluded, seemed astonished that her husband, instead of laughing, as she did, at the supposition, seemed restless and uneasy, and asked a thousand questions respecting Mr. Meredith, whose appearance in the park he stigmatised as an impertinent intrusion, and was angry at his wife's attempt to vindicate him by observing that he had only jumped the fence to call off his dogs, who were the trespassers, if any.

"He had better not let me catch him, or his dogs, on

my grounds," said Irwin, with considerable heat, "or, he may depend on it, I shall treat them with very little ceremony."

"Why, surely, you would not offend him, Edmund?" observed his wife, who did not see the evil effect her thoughtless candour had produced upon her husband. Until this moment, indeed, she had been totally unconscious of the latent evil which slumbered in her husband's disposition, and which this spark had kindled into a flame.

Irwin was jealous—jealous of he knew not whom, or what—but, certain he was, that there must be some foundation for the remarks Lady Raeburn had made; and Rosa, when she that night quitted Levison Hall, whispered to Fanny,

"The change I prognosticated has begun—Edmund is unkind and unjust to me."

"He will not long remain so, Rosa," returned her friend, who was greatly agitated, "leave him to his own good sense, and calm reflection, and do not see that he is wrong."

A week passed on. The Earl and his family returned the visit of their friends, and, to Lady Raeburn's infinite joy, all traces of Mr. Irwin's malady seemed to have vanished, and Mr. Meredith appeared forgotten. What, therefore, was her surprise, when, a few evenings after, Irwin rushed into the drawing-room at Levison House, in a state of visible agitation, which he endeavoured to account for by saying that he had had a vexatious letter by the mail, and was fearful he should be obliged to go up to London, on account of a law-suit with his uncle's late steward.

Plausible as this appeared, however, it did not fully satisfy Lady Raeburn, whose suspicions were still more excited when she saw her visitor draw the Earl aside and enter into some secret detail with him, which had the evident effect of communicating the emotion he felt to his auditor, and they instantly withdrew together to the library.

It was impossible for Lady Raeburn to form a conjecture as to the purport of this conference, but she awaited with anxiety its termination. Earl Raeburn, however, did not return to the drawing-room, and, upon inquiry, his lady found that he had quitted the house with his friend.

"Whither could they be gone, at that time of night?" was the question which arose almost involuntarily to her lips, as Ned told her that he had saddled his lordship's horse for him, but that he (Earl Raeburn) had declined his further attendance.

"There's no good a-foot, my lady," said Ned, after gazing intently in her face for a moment, "and, if my master kills me, I'll follow him."

Before she could utter a reply, Ned was gone—and, in a state of suspense and terror, which left her not the power of reasoning, Lady Raeburn awaited his return.

In about half an hour, she had the satisfaction of seeing Ned spring up the Hall steps with an alacrity that immediately re-assured her.

"It is all right, my lady—I ran across, and got out at the little wicket before them, and hid myself; and, as they passed me, I could hear they were good friends—but yet I followed them, and saw my lord turn off to the

distinguishing traits of character. By nature I was proud, rash, and thoughtless: but the mystery which involved my birth, excited my feelings and taught me to reflect: the noble confidence and liberality of my benefactor, too, made me emulous to deserve it: and, for my pride, the last remnants of that were buried in the grave of my 'GIPSY MOTHER!' "

THE END.

Directions to the Binder for placing the Plates.

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